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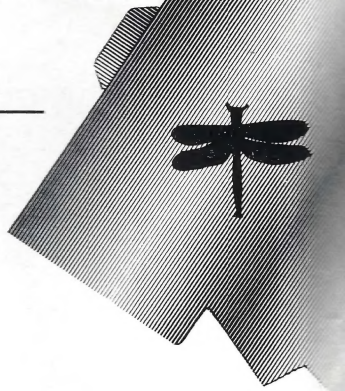

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

On Editing

Readers of this space will have noticed the distinctly apolitical tone of previous editorials. There's a reason for this, but I'll come to that later.

I read an interesting article last night about gossip. What the author basically says is that gossip serves two purposes, defamation and the creation of the feeling that one is "in the know." "The problem," she goes on to say, "is that while being gossiped about is no fun at all, gossiping about others can be quite enjoyable."

Indeed. Since becoming editor, one of my main concerns has been the avoidance of the type of petty, in-group bickering that has brought more than one organization down. Keeping the editorials politics-free, I thought, would help Animag become the magazine that was envisioned by its founders; informative, exciting, fun to read. Partisanship, feuds, defamation, this is the stuff that caters to the egos of the few and shortchanges the majority of the readership, who aren't necessarily interested in who's slandering whom.

"An editor's only permanent alliance is with the audience, the readership," Arthur Plotnik says in his wonderfully succinct manual, *The Elements of Editing*. If a journalist could have just one book as her bible, it's this one. An editor, I believe, has the opportunity and the responsibility to raise relevant issues in an open forum. There are many topics within our industry—especially in the American animation industry, considered by some to be Japanese animation's "country cousin"—that should and will be discussed here in Editorial Comments.

Raising relevant topics for discussion is an important aspect of an editor's duties. However, an editor must also be accountable to her own integrity. Allying with the readers' interest does not mean divesting oneself of all personal opinions, and objectivity is not synonymous with detachment. There have been times, I'll admit, that I've been tempted to inject a few words of my own into a controversial issue. Beyond my editorial duties, I have a personal interest in Japanese animation—it's one of my hobbies, too. Just like you, I have an opinion on the Americanizing of *Robotech* . . . but if you want to know what it is, you'll have to approach me in person. You won't find out in the pages of this magazine. Anything less would be an inflation of my own ego at the expense of the readership.

Maintaining this balance between personality and professionalism is what I'm trying my best to accomplish.

✒ ✒ ✒

Earlier this year, the entire animation world was shocked to receive news of the death of Osamu Tezuka, the Japanese comics artist and animation pioneer. Tezuka's many works and beloved characters were known worldwide, although he is perhaps most famous in America as the creator of Tetsuwan Atom, known here as Astro Boy.

In this issue, Frederik Schodt pays homage to the man considered by many to be the "god of Japanese animation."

Almost five months exactly after the death of Tezuka, we were again saddened to hear of the death of Mel Blanc, "the Man of 1,000 Voices." Born in 1908, Blanc was a San Francisco native and the embodiment of Warner Brothers cartoons. Among his many well-known character voices (Porky Pig, Daffy Duck, Yosemite Sam), he admitted last year that his favorite was Bugs Bunny, although he hated the carrots he chewed for sound effects—he spit them out into a trash can. Blanc's last performance was the live-action/animated film *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* in which he performed several of his famous voices. Blanc died on July 10, 1989 of heart problems. He was 81 years old.

The names of both Tezuka and Blanc are synonymous with animation in their respective countries. Both men have left a legacy of unforgettable work, and lovely memories.

Trish Ledoux
Editor

MEGAZONE 23, PART III

Ryou

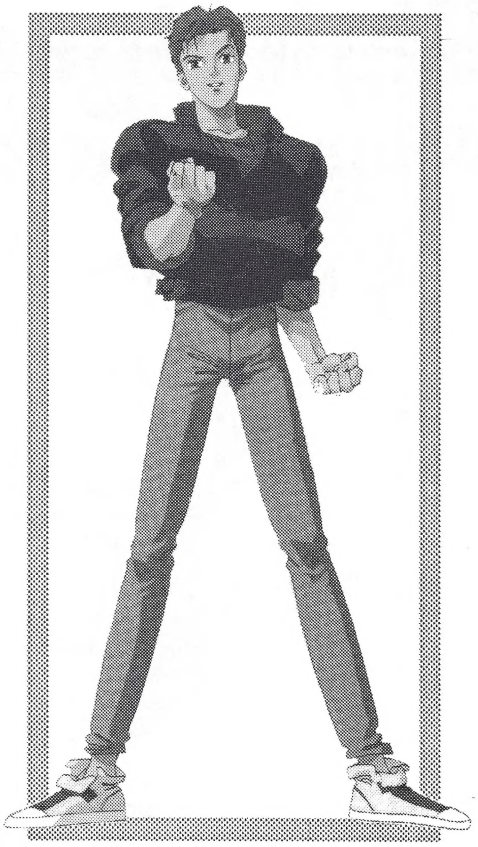
A light-haired girl who dreams of becoming an idol singer. Eiji meets her in the store where he and his cycle gang hangs out. For some unknown reason, all information on SYSTEM regarding Ryou has been erased.

The rumors are true—the long-awaited *Megazone 23, Part III* will be released by Victor Video this fall.

The OAV will be released in two separate installments; "Eve's Awakening" and "Emancipation Day." The setting is Earth, several centuries after the closing scene in *Megazone 23, Part II*. *Part III* is directed by Shinshi Araboku and Kenichi Hachigoku; character design and art direction is by Yoshiyuki Kitazume (*Char's Counterattack*, *Gundam Double Zeta*). "Eve" character design is by Haruhiko Mikimoto (*Macross*, *Orguss*). Mecha designs are by Morifumi Naka.

Eiji Takanaka, an easygoing student interested in motorcycles and game simulations, becomes involved in Eden City's computer network (SYSTEM) when he displays an aptitude for machine language. Eiji is rapidly promoted to elite staff member at E=X, the management group that oversees SYSTEM, and begins to investigate his suspicions about the huge computer network. SYSTEM enforces absolute management control and maintenance of data on every citizen in the city.

The largest industry in Eden City, Orange System, is dissatisfied with SYSTEM's dominance and instigates a takeover plot. Eiji is chosen by E=X as the best candidate for advance guard against the usurpers and unwittingly becomes aware of a great secret regarding SYSTEM and the Earth herself.



Eiji Takanaka

A talented student scouted by the giant computer management group E=X. A meeting with a mysterious girl who admires Eve causes him to begin searching for the secret of Eden City.

Shion

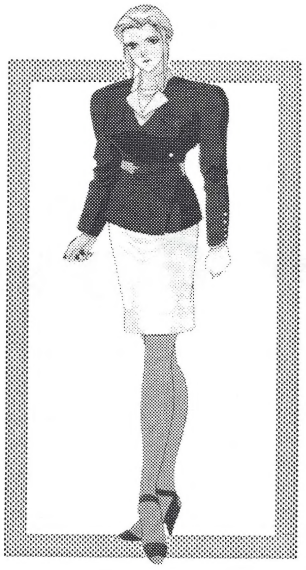
Orange System "ghost operator" and the manager of the CG (computer graphic) idol, Eve.

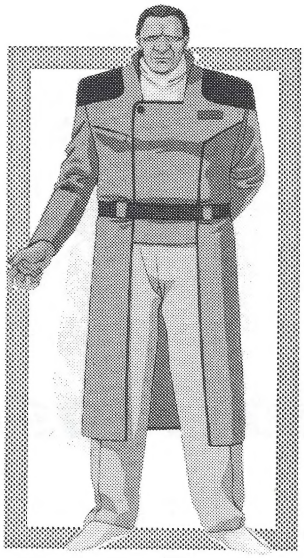
Yakov Halm

Director of E=X and a brilliant computer interfacer. Halm is the first one to realize Eiji's potential and recruits him as Garland's operator.

Muellar

An E=X employee and second in charge to Yakov. Eiji's supervisor.

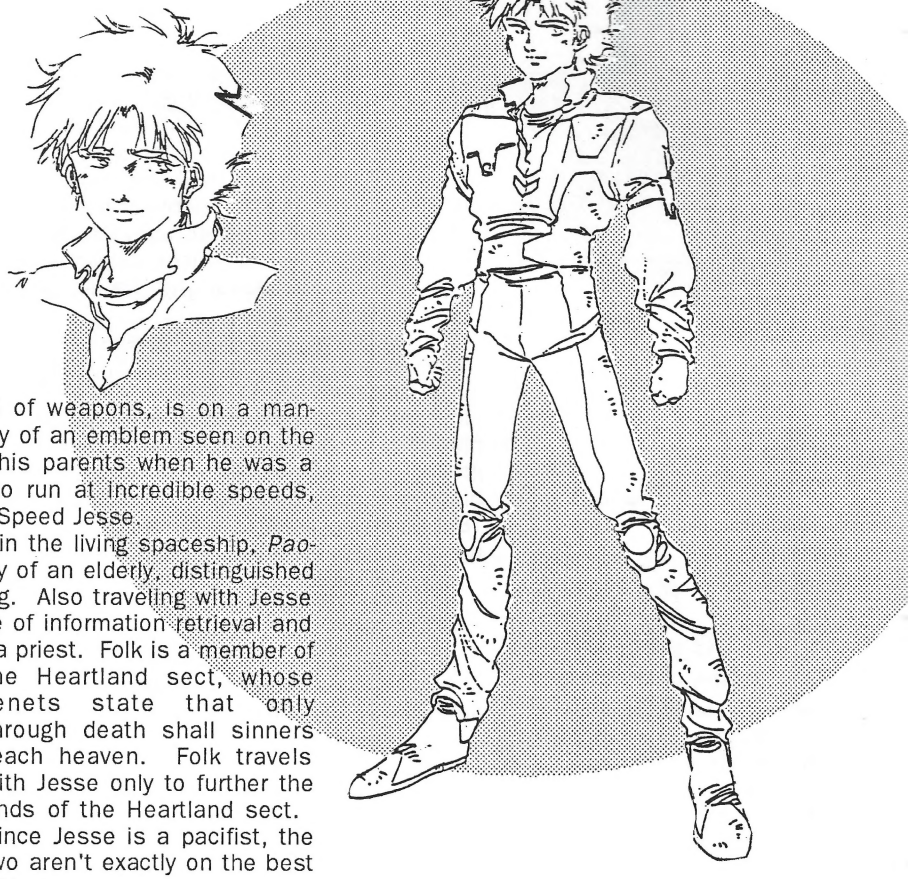




Delekman

Orange System representative and leader of the movement against SYSTEM.

High Speed Jesse,
Volumes 1 & 2



High Speed Jesse, originally a novel by Eiichiro Saito, is soon to be released as an OAV series by VAP Video. Both volumes will be 30 minutes long. Character designs are by Haruhiko Mikimoto and Akinobu Takahashi. Mikimoto is also the artist for the original novel's cover and interior illustrations.

Jesse, a man with a hatred of weapons, is on a manhunt—his only lead the memory of an emblem seen on the ship that attacked and killed his parents when he was a child. Jesse has the ability to run at incredible speeds, hence his nom de guerre, High Speed Jesse.

Jesse travels through space in the living spaceship, *Paolon*, which assumes the identity of an elderly, distinguished gentleman when communicating. Also traveling with Jesse is his "sister," Tiana (in charge of information retrieval and management), and Folk Green, a priest. Folk is a member of the Heartland sect, whose tenets state that only through death shall sinners reach heaven. Folk travels with Jesse only to further the ends of the Heartland sect. Since Jesse is a pacifist, the two aren't exactly on the best of terms . . . .

Bio-Booster Guyver

Bio-Booster Guyver is a remake of a 1987 OAV of the same title scheduled to be released by Bandai later this summer.

Although the 1989 *Guyver*'s first installment will basically be a remake of the 1987 version, it will feature a new director (Kouichi Ishikuro) and new character designer (Hidetoshi Omori). The new *Guyver* will also follow the original manga's storyline more closely.

The 1987 OAV was released as a one-shot, heavily edited adaptation from Yoshiki Takaya's original *Bio-Booster Guyver* manga.

Bandai is planning to release six volumes in the new series.

BUBBLEGUM CRISIS 6

The sixth installment in the ongoing story of the Knight Sabers is a continuation of the story that began in *Bubblegum Crisis 5, Moonlight Rambler*.

When a sighting of the Knight Sabers at a scene of a crime is reported, not only are Celia and the Knight Sabers surprised—ADP and Genom are also very interested in discovering the truth.

Priss refuses to accept a challenge from the impostors, still suffering from the shock of Silvy's tragic death (*BGC 5, Moonlight Rambler*).

One other mourns Silvy—the female boomer, Anri. A mysterious man plotting world domination, Largo, tells Anri that the Knight Sabers are responsible and Anri takes matters into her own hands .

Project Ako IV

The high-powered girl, the alien, and the spoiled rich girl go at it again for one last time in a new 50-minute OAV from Pony Canyon this fall.

The madonna of Graviton Institute for Girls, Ayumi Sensei (Teacher Ayumi), is looking forward to her upcoming omiai **(marriage-broker arranged meeting). The girls wish her well, but** well **is hardly a word to describe the antics in this no-holds-barred video.**

Director Yuuji Moriyama says that B-ko's father (Project A-ko II**) and failed suitor Kei (**Project A-ko III**) aren't throwaway characters, but foreshadowing for what he calls the "all-star cast grand finale,"** Project A-ko IV.

DEVILMAN

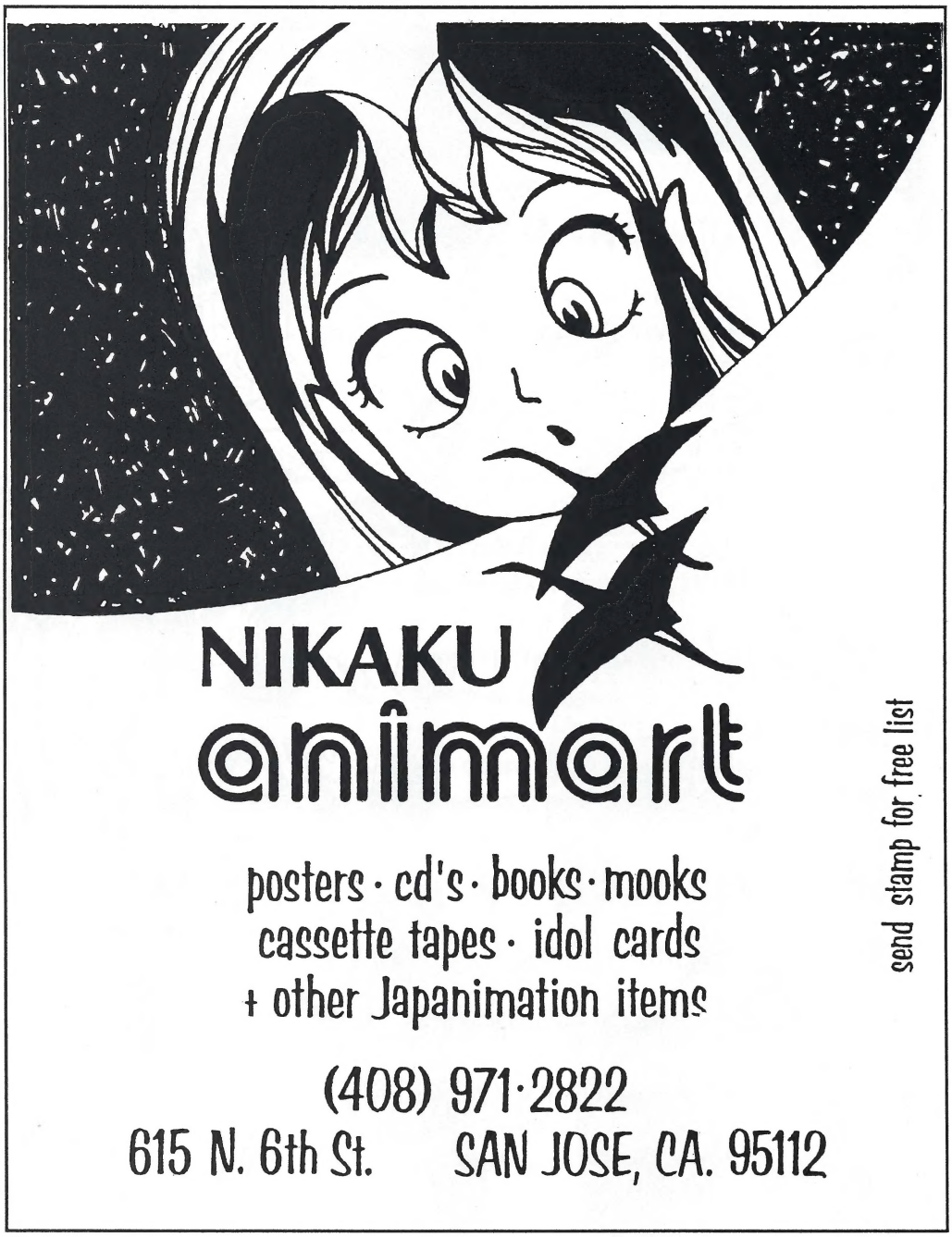
Another installment in the recently rejuvenated Devilman series will be released on December 15 by Bandai and the staff who presented the first new Devilman installment approximately a year and a half ago. The story, which was made famous by Go Nagai's manga series, will be based on the popular female demon Siren storyline.

DIRTY PAIR

Another Dirty Pair video is scheduled to be released by Bandai, the company responsible for Affair of Nolandia and the Dirty Pair Movie (also known as Project Eden). The video will be about 60 minutes in length; it's said that character designs will not be changed.

LEDA 2

Due to the unfortunate bankruptcy of Diva Inc. (formerly known as Kaname Productions), the fate of the proposed sequel to the Leda OAV released four years ago is currently in a void of uncertainty.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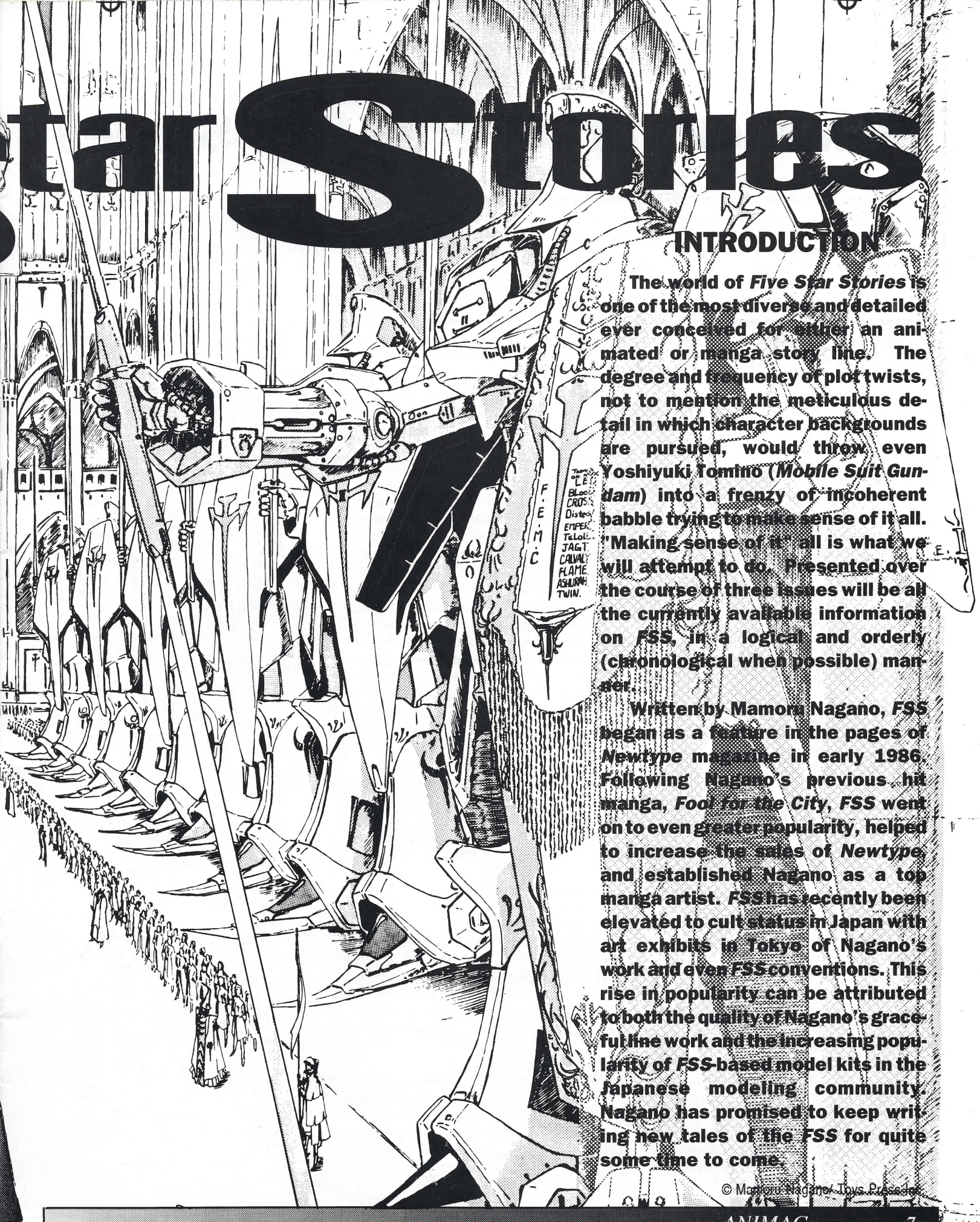
LOCKE THE SUPERMAN

Five years have passed since the theatrical release of the science fiction story, Locke the Superman. This September, Locke will return in a new OAV from Bandai.

The first episode in a projected multi-OAV series, Locke the Superman centers on Lord Leon, an esper who turns vengeful vigilante when his family is murdered. The story is adapted from an original Yuki Hijiri manga compilation, and Susumu Shiroume's original character designs have been updated to reflect an older Locke.

The Five S



tar Stories

INTRODUCTION

The world of *Five Star Stories* is one of the most diverse and detailed ever conceived for either an animated or manga story line. The degree and frequency of plot twists, not to mention the meticulous detail in which character backgrounds are pursued, would throw even Yoshiyuki Tomino (*Mobile Suit Gundam*) into a frenzy of incoherent babble trying to make sense of it all. "Making sense of it" all is what we will attempt to do. Presented over the course of three issues will be all the currently available information on *FSS*, in a logical and orderly (chronological when possible) manner.

Written by Mamoru Nagano, *FSS* began as a feature in the pages of *Newtype* magazine in early 1986. Following Nagano's previous hit manga, *Fool for the City*, *FSS* went on to even greater popularity, helped to increase the sales of *Newtype*, and established Nagano as a top manga artist. *FSS* has recently been elevated to cult status in Japan with art exhibits in Tokyo of Nagano's work and even *FSS* conventions. This rise in popularity can be attributed to both the quality of Nagano's graceful line work and the increasing popularity of *FSS*-based model kits in the Japanese modeling community. Nagano has promised to keep writing new tales of the *FSS* for quite some time to come.

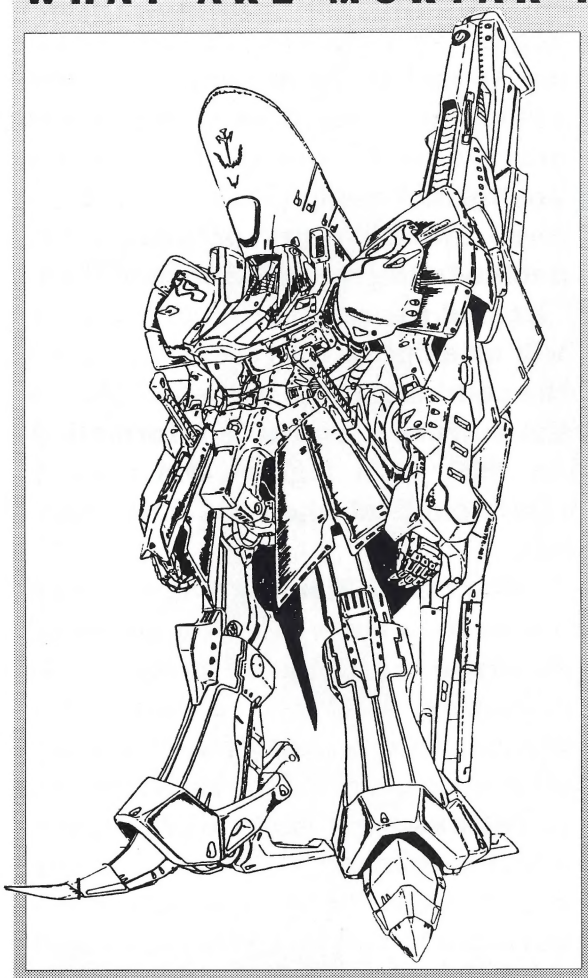
© Mamoru Nagano/ Toys Presents

Technology of the Five Star Stories

To enter the world of the *FSS* is to enter a world so familiar and yet so strange. It is a world where artificial beings time-slip at will, where huge battle machines live for thousands of years and human beings live between 250 and 400 years (only at the age of 60 are you considered an adult). It is a world full of savage bands of mercenaries, and great and mighty governments.

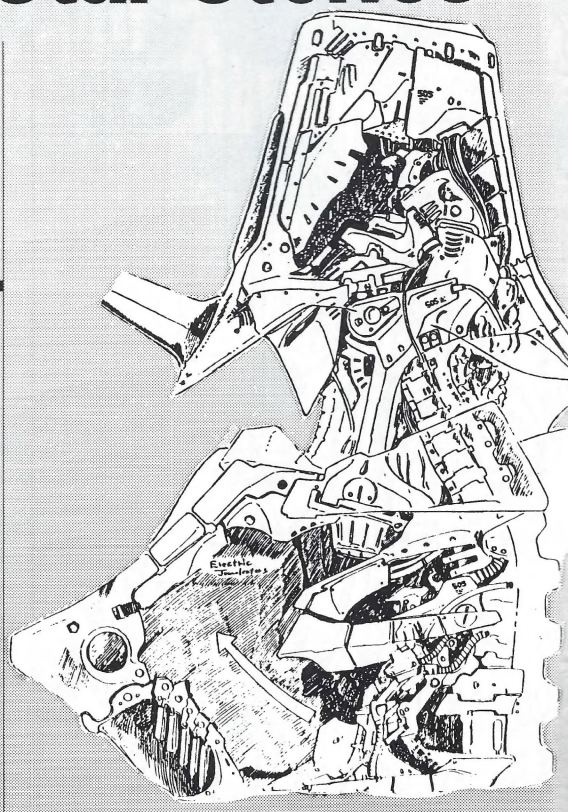
The technology behind *FSS* is both advanced and quite primitive. Many of Nagano's concepts are deviations on classic science fiction technology. There are, however, two trademark technologies that give *FSS* its unique feel—the **mortar headds** and the **fatimas**.

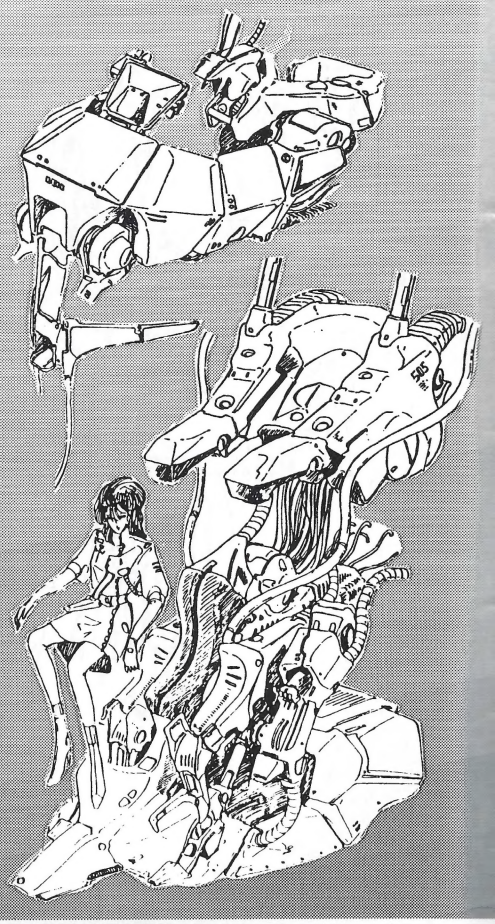
WHAT ARE MORTAR HEADDS?



Mortar headds are large humanoid mecha (robots, if you like), averaging 15 meters in height. Some mortar headds, such as the Jagt Mirage, can be as large as 40 meters. Mortar headd design is widely varied. Each major power has its own unique symbol. Mortar headds are sentient in varying degrees depending on the skill of their builder ("meister"), and possess the same passions and loyalties as any human soldier. Biology as much as technology is applied in mortar headd brain and support processor construction. This "core" is artificially cultivated using the Ezlazer Process and the robotic frame is built around it. The mortar headd draws its power from a photon reactor engine which produces great amounts of power (3 trillion hp for the Knight of Gold) by colliding photons. While most mortar headds have a single power plant, some have several to provide additional power to weapons or flight systems. More advanced designs even have teleport ability. All mortar headds are armed with swords, either the heated-blade type or beam, and some carry projectile weapons;the throwlancer generator shoots miniature beam sabers, and the Led Mirage's flame launcher gun fires a stream of plasma much like a flamethrower. Some mortar headds even carry buster launchers, a powerful energy weapon that warps the very fabric of space and time.

The control system of a mortar headd is divided into two parts. The fatima is linked by direct physical contact to the mortar headd, and are responsible for charging weapons, teleport jumps, scans, and flight system controls. They also serve as a link between the human (or non-human) pilot and the mortar headd, allowing the two to interact efficiently. The human pilot, the second part of the control system, is solely responsible for the movement of the unit. The pilot stands, rather than sits, completely enclosed within the mortar headd system. Each movement of the pilot is expressed by the mortar headd, and each control system is customized to a particular pilot and must be rebuilt should the mortar headd pilot be changed. Some of the less advanced mortar headds do not employ fatimas, but rather a simpler, non-human unit called an "etriml." Etrimls are typically never removed from the mortar headd for which it is created.

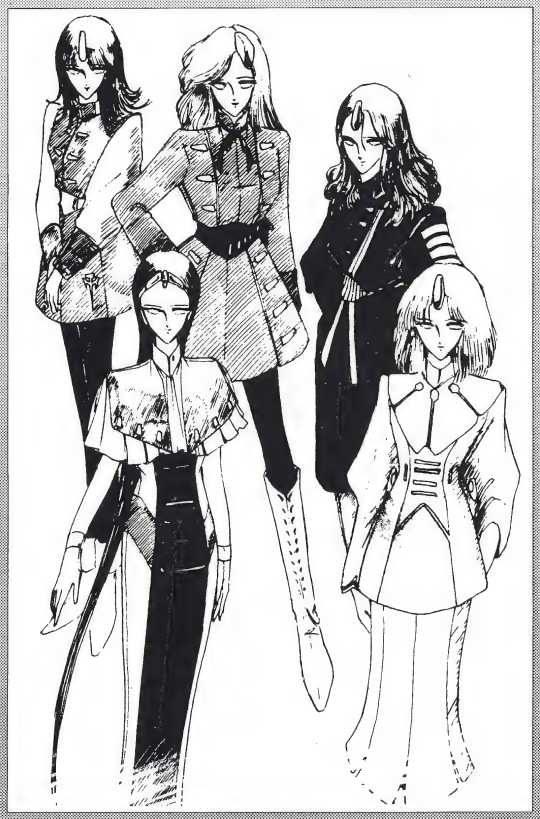




WHAT ARE FATIMAS?

Fatimas are artificially created humans who are reared in a traditional fashion. When 20 years of age, the fatima is subjected to the "Ezlazer Process." This ten-year procedure increases the fatima's strength and reflexes, halts physical aging, implants the memory crystal (an interface allowing the fatima a direct link with a mortar headd), and imposes a series of special thought limiters (mind control). Generally, fatimas are the companions of persons with headliner status (the rank of a noble mortar headd pilot, or knight). Occasionally fatimas will serve others. Fatimas are not purchased but awarded to their owners, although the fatima must make the final decision whether or not to serve a particular master. It is traditional for fatimas to be "impressed," or bonded, to their masters for life.

Fatimas are *exactly* like the genetically enchanced humans of the *Five Star Stories* world,

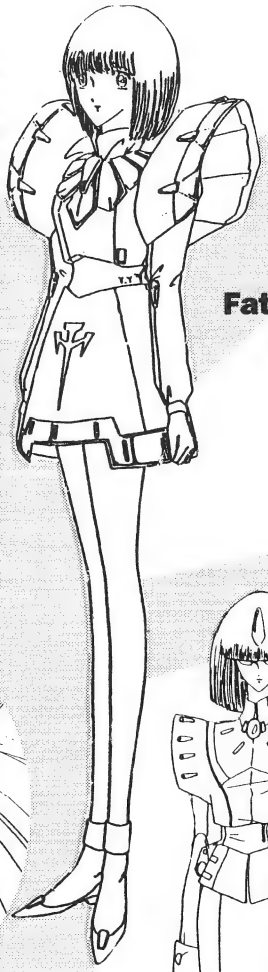


with one exception—they cannot reproduce. (Thereason for this, Nagano says, "is to keep men from leaving their wives.") Fatimas are designed by biological engineers known as fatima meights. The greatest of these meights is Dr. Ballanche of Addler.

Dr. Ballanche is responsible for the creation of the three sisters, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atrophos. These fatimas are completely without any form of mind control, and as such, are more powerful and independent than most others of their kind.

THE THREE FATES FATIMAS

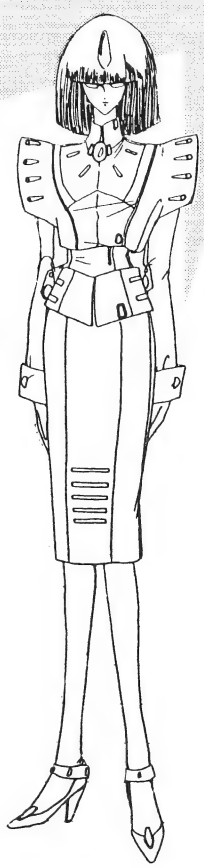
Ballanche Fatima No. 44, Lachesis (the 44th fatima created by Dr. Ballanche), was born in 2988 on the planet Addler. Fatima for Amaterasu since the time of her impression, her appearance is that of a blonde-haired little girl, until the time she is lost in a teleport accident with the Knight of Gold. Upon her recovery in 3238, Lachesis adopts the more traditional fatima guise. Lachesis desires to one day bear a child, even though this is normally impossible for fatimas. (But then, as Mamoru Nagano says, anything can happen in the *Five Star Stories*.)



Fatima Fortune Lachesis

Fatima Fates Clotho

Ballanche Fatima No. 45, Clotho, was born in 2988 on Addler. Fatima to Colus III and Colus VI, she is a pacifist and initially is loath to operate a mortar headd. After witnessing the valiant efforts of the mortar headd, Junchoon, Clotho comes to accept her "fate" as a fatima.



Fatima Fates Atrophos

Ballanche Fatima No. 43, Atrophos, was born in the year 2987 on Addler. Atrophos is fatima for Amaterasu in 3952, and in 3960, for Upandla and the Knight of Gold Mk. II, Patraksire Mirage.

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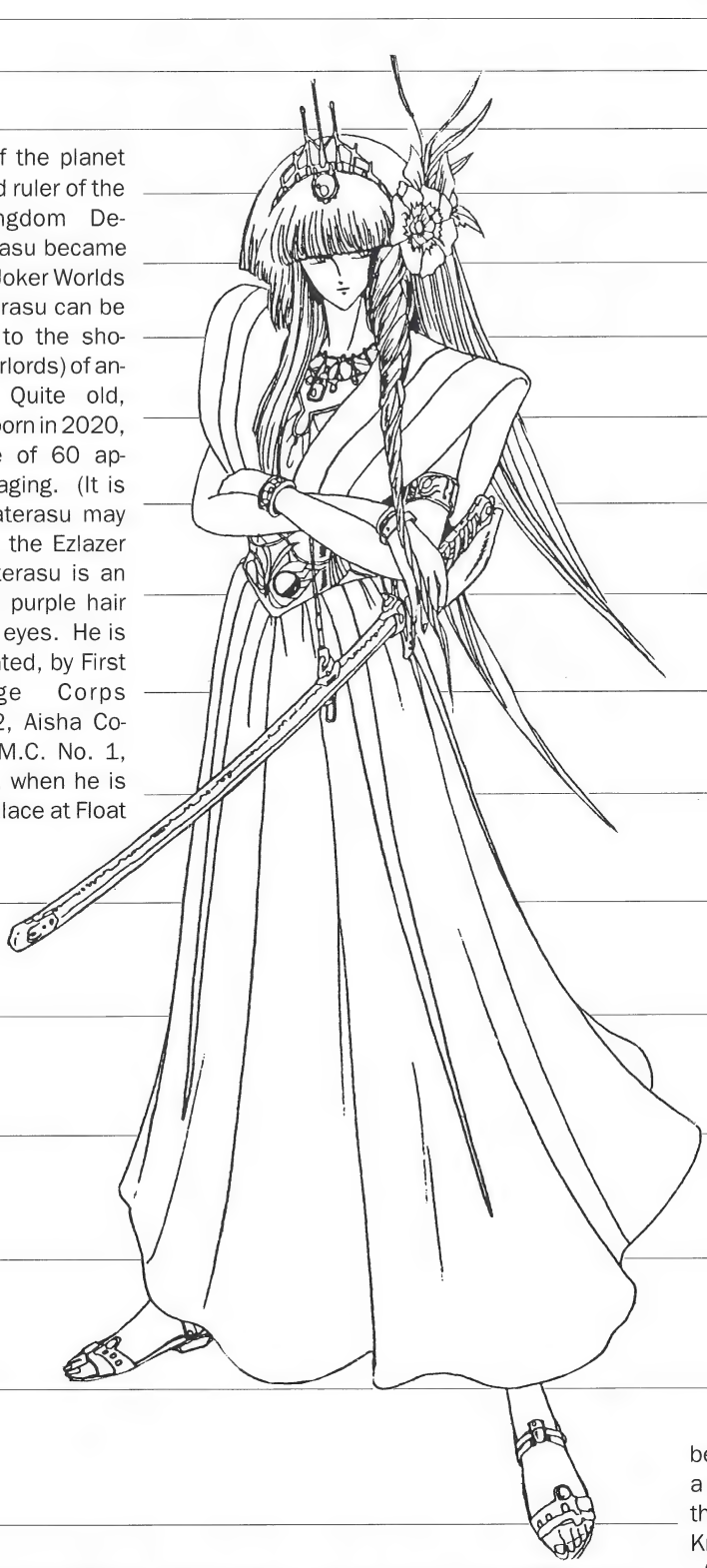
THE CAST OF

Ladios Sopp, aka Amaterasu

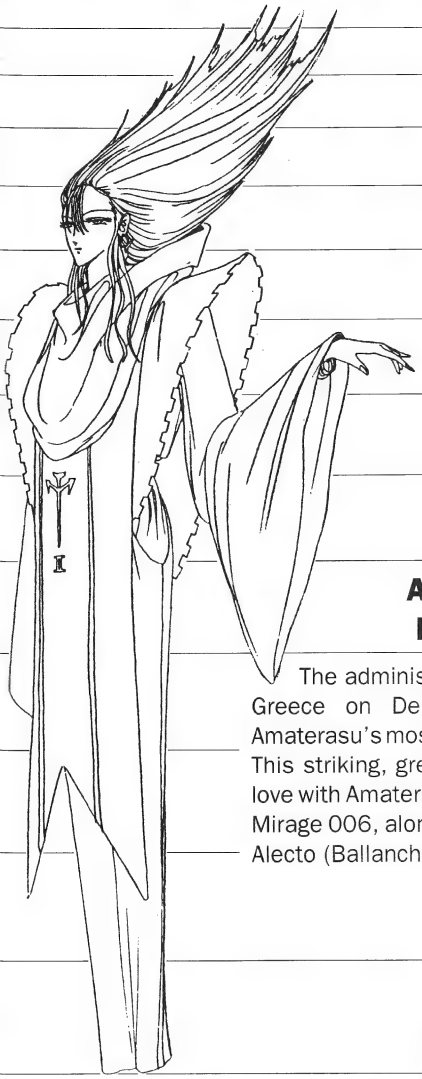
President of the planet Delta Belune and ruler of the Amaterasu Kingdom Demesnes, Amaterasu became king of all of the Joker Worlds in 3960. Amaterasu can be best compared to the shoguns (military warlords) of ancient Japan. Quite old, Amaterasu was born in 2020, and at the age of 60 appeared to stop aging. (It is hinted that Amaterasu may have undergone the Ezlazer Process.) Amaterasu is an albino with pale purple hair and piercing red eyes. He is often impersonated, by First Easter Mirage Corps (F.E.M.C.) No. 2, Aisha Codante, and F.E.M.C. No. 1, Upandla Raymu, when he is away from his palace at Float Temple.



Amaterasu Des Grand Adas of Mikado, "The God of Light"

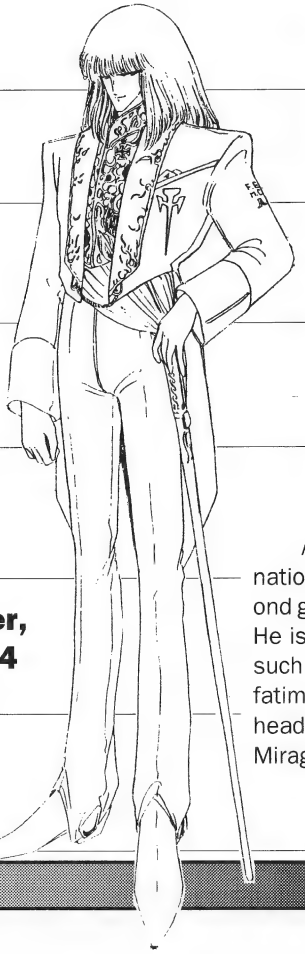
"Ladios Sopp" is a young man who hopes someday to be the greatest meister in all the systems. His goal is to build a mortar headd which does not require a fatima. Sopp built the famous Colus Junchoon and for his fatima Lachesis, the Knight of Gold. His real fame, however, came at the battle of Tolbok in 2973 when he produced 12 mortar headds in a scant 36 hours. To maintain his guise as Ladios Sopp, Amaterasu frequently changes his true eye and hair color.

CHARACTERS



Aisha Codante, F.E.M.C. No. 2

The administrator of the country of Greece on Delta Belune, Aisha is Amaterasu's most trusted Mirage Knight. This striking, green-haired woman is in love with Amaterasu. She pilots a Cross Mirage 006, along with her fatima Fates Alecto (Ballanche Fatima No. 39).



Falk U. Rogner, F.E.M.C. No. 4

An artificial person or "machine child," Rogner is the ruler of the nation of Babiron on Delta Belune. Rogner is also the leader of the second generation F.E.M.C. as well as military leader of the A.K.D. forces. He is the greatest swordsman in all of the Five Star Systems, and as such is invaluable to his good friend, Amaterasu. Accompanied by his fatima, Eatta (Ballanche Fatima No. 7), he has piloted many mortar headds, including the Rouge Mirage,the Babiron (a custimized Led Mirage) and the Hunting Mirage.

THE PERSONAL GUARD OF AMATERASU

Land Waund Sppacorn, F.E.M.C. No. 3

Sppacorn is the powerful leader of Amaterasu's personal guard. Due to an accident, his left arm was replaced with cybernetics and his damaged vocal cords replaced with a speech synthesizer, giving him his characteristic "machine voice." To emphasize this, Sppacorn wears heavy battle armor which gives him the appearance of a small mortar headd. His fatima is Fatima Fates Tisphone (Ballanche Fatima No. 41).

Poesche Nomien, F.E.M.C. No. 13

Poesche dresses like a harlequin with spurs and spiked hair, and is a master with a beam lance.

Nu, Suoad Graphite, F.E.M.C. No. 17

Graphite is deadly with twin spuds (an energy blade produced in various sizes), and wears battle armor reminiscent of a mortar headd.

Lie Ex, F.E.M.C. No. 7

One of the chief weapons instructors of the A.K.D., a master of the laser scythe and possessor of one of the two known male fatimas, Icarus (Ballanche Fatima No. 33).

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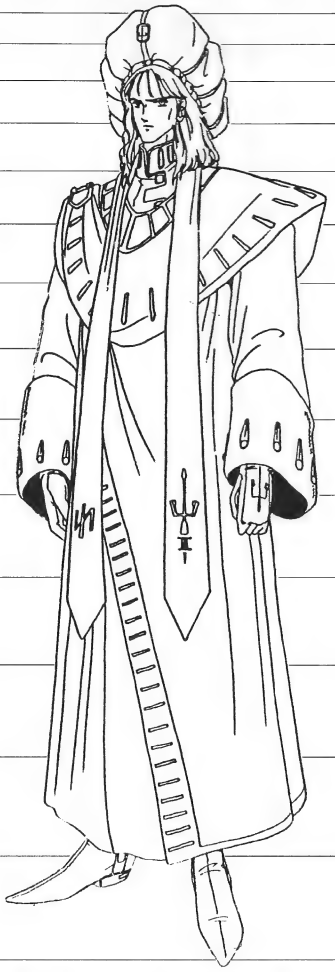
Mission Routh

President of the Lent Council on Addler, Routh was replaced by Uber while Routh was on a ten-year vacation. After seeing how Uber mismanaged the Lent government, Routh requested assistance from Amaterasu in removing Uber from power. Although primarily a politician, Routh does have headliner status. Along with his Fatima Fates Megaella (Ballanche Fatima No. 40), Routh pilots the mortar headd Chumuth.

Voards Viewlard

To keep a close eye on Uber, Routh adopts the persona of Voards Viewlard, an agent of the Lent Council. Although Routh prefers the freedom afforded to the Viewlard persona, the guise is seen through by many loyal headliners. Consequently, Voards Viewlard is frequently asked to return and rule the nation. Routh has a misguided romantic interest in Ladios Sopp, for he believes that Sopp is really a woman in disguise.

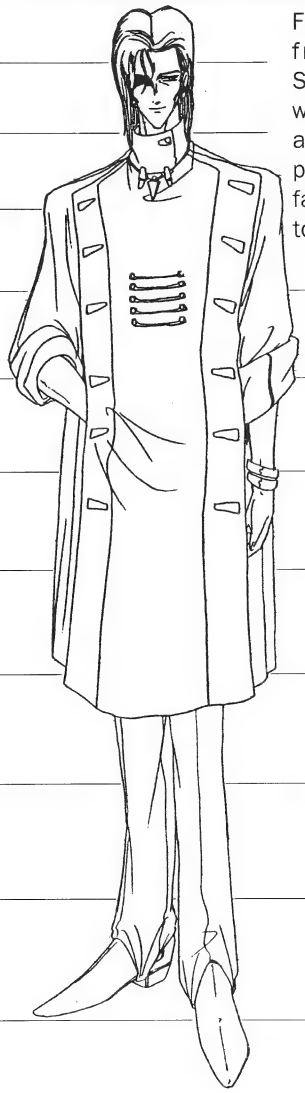


King of Trio de Colus, Colus III

Colus is leader of the Trio Temple Knights, pilot of the mortar headd Junchoon, and a good friend of Ladios Sopp. He has had two fatimas, Fatima Mortard Ulicul and Fatima Fates Clotho (Ballanche Fatima No. 45). Colus III is a great meister in his own right. He designed the buster lance and personally supervised the extensive refitting of the Junchoon.

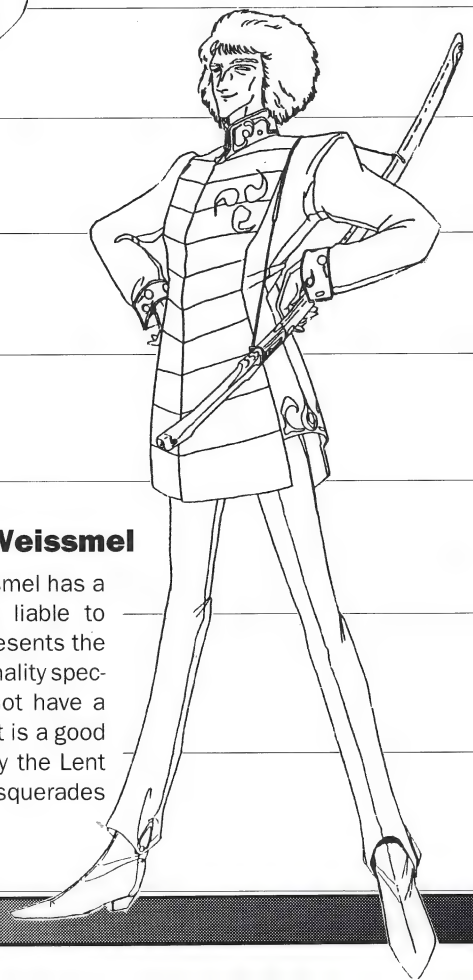
Lord Dr. Chrome Ballanche

Ballanche is the most famous of the four fatima meights. He designed the greatest fatimas ever created. the Three Fates, Fatimas. A good friend of Ladios Sopp, Ballanche works for Amaterasu and the A.K.D., and protests the use of fatimas as mere toys of the nobility.



Dr. Morard Carbyte

Carbyte is one of the four fatima meights, and a close friend and rival of Dr. Ballanche. Upon Ballanche's death, Amaterasu seeks out Carbyte to become the new fatima meight of the A.K.D. Initially, Carbyte flees and seeks refuge on Juno. It is here in 2989 that he sees the Fatima Fortune. This event drives him to insanity. Eventually, Carbyte returns to the A.K.D. to render service to their fatimas. In 3100, he completes his best work, "Tower."



Sir Grard Sydmian

The fifth and final Black Knight, Sydmian was the leader of the Colus mortar headd forces under Colus V. He pilots the Vatsu, the Black Knight, along with the fatima of the Black Knights, Mortard Est. After the death of his master in 3960, he alone is left to oppose the A.K.D. While protecting Colus VI, Sydmian is killed after a 65-hour fight with Karel Crysalis, F.E.M.C. No. 32. With Sydmian's death, Juno falls to the A.K.D.

Decors Weissmel

The third Black Knight, Weissmel has a twisted personality which is only liable to change when he dies. Decors represents the complete opposite end of the personality spectrum from Amaterasu. He does not have a great deal of physical charisma, but is a good fighter with a strong arm. Hired by the Lent Government's Uber, Weissmel masquerades as Uber's nephew in Bustogne.

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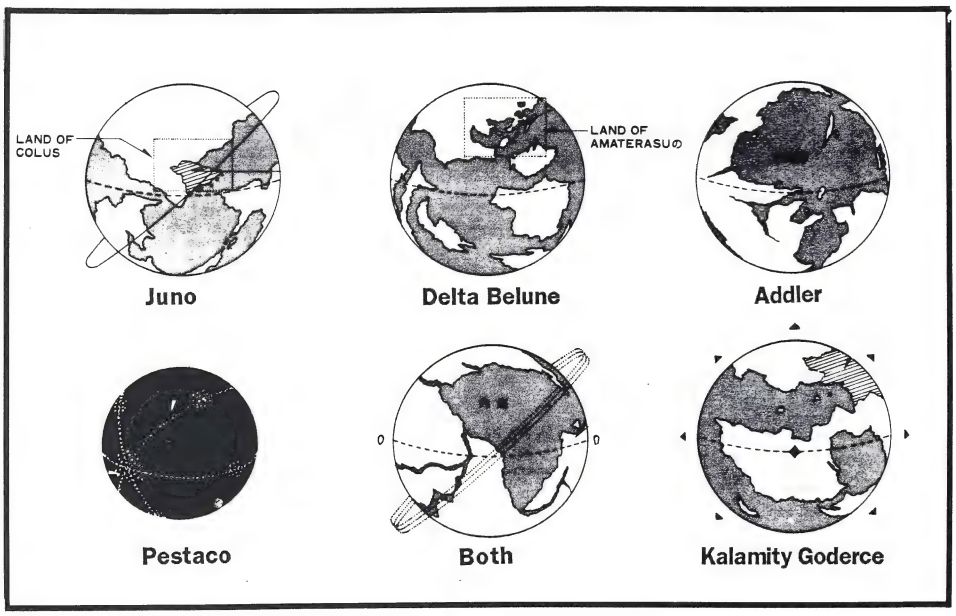
THE SETTING

The tales of *Five Star Stories* take place around a group of five stars known collectively as the Joker Systems. The stars are named in classic fashion: Easter, Wester, Southerned, and Northe. A great comet, Slant passes through the Joker Systems every 1,500 years. As with many cultures, the comet is seen as a passing herald of a major event.

The center of the Joker Systems is the planet Delta Belune in the Easter Star System. Delta Belune is the birth-world of the Joker Systems and the home of the Amaterasu Kingdom Demesnes (A.K.D.). There are three other sovereign nations on Delta Belune—Greece, administrated by Aisha Codante; Babiron, ruled by Falk U. Rogner; and Noesque, administered by Dagquean Ruse. Each of these rulers are members of the A.K.D.'s elite fighting division, the First Easter Mirage Corps (F.E.M.C.). Floating 3,000 meters above the surface of Delta Belune is the central governing body of the A.K.D., Float Temple. It is from here that Amaterasu rules all of the Joker Worlds. Float Temple is huge and supports over 75,000 government workers. There are ten temple towers—Blood, Flame, Destiny, Emper, Jagt, Calvery, Lead, Terror, Twin, and Ashura. They represent the nations of the Greece Northern Ten with the central citadel of Lachesis Castle, which is the size of 20 castles. The grounds of Float Temple are decorated like a Japanese garden and are filled with the hobbies of Amaterasu.



On Delta Belune's surface in the Sea of Ulama is the Super Plant Island, a huge industrial center which produces all manner of goods for dispersal throughout Delta Belune, including spacecraft and mortar headds. The other two nations on Delta Belune are named Shorter and Stant. Amaterasu does not interfere in their operation, but he does own the land these nations occupy.

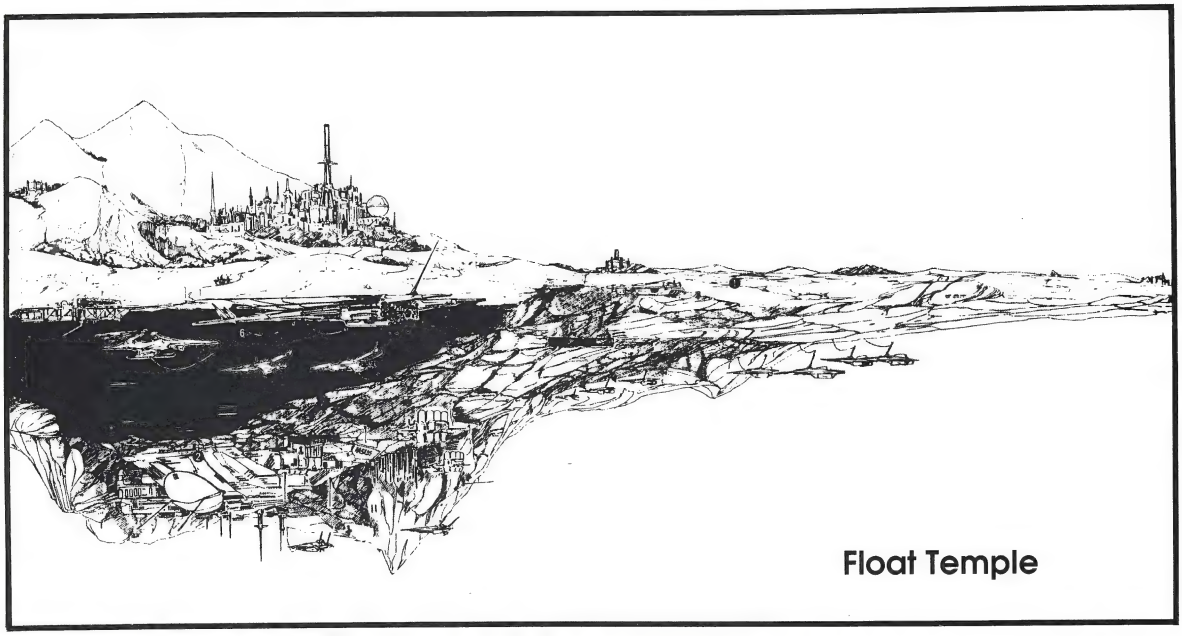
The planet Addler, the home of Dr. Ballanche, is the only other inhabited planet in the Easter System. Two major governments are located here: Bakin Rakan, which is ruled by King Mimas; and Bustogne, presided over by Mission Routh of the Lent Government. Although initially not a member of the A.K.D., Addler was incorporated in 3162.

Orbiting Wester is the planet Both, heavily populated with three major government bodies: Meyoyo Imperial Court, ruled by King Molta; Gamma Sharn, ruled by King Leizol III; and finally, Hashua, ruled by the great warlord, Corett Cruel and his A'p Temple Knights.

Juno is the capital of the Southerned star system. Two major nations, Hagooda and the Trio de Colus, make up Juno's embattled government structure. The Trio de Colus is comprised of three separate nations: Colus, Meistner, and Ballanka. Juno is unified under the Trio de Colus in 2989 when Hagooda is defeated in a civil war. In 3960, Juno is added to the A.K.D.

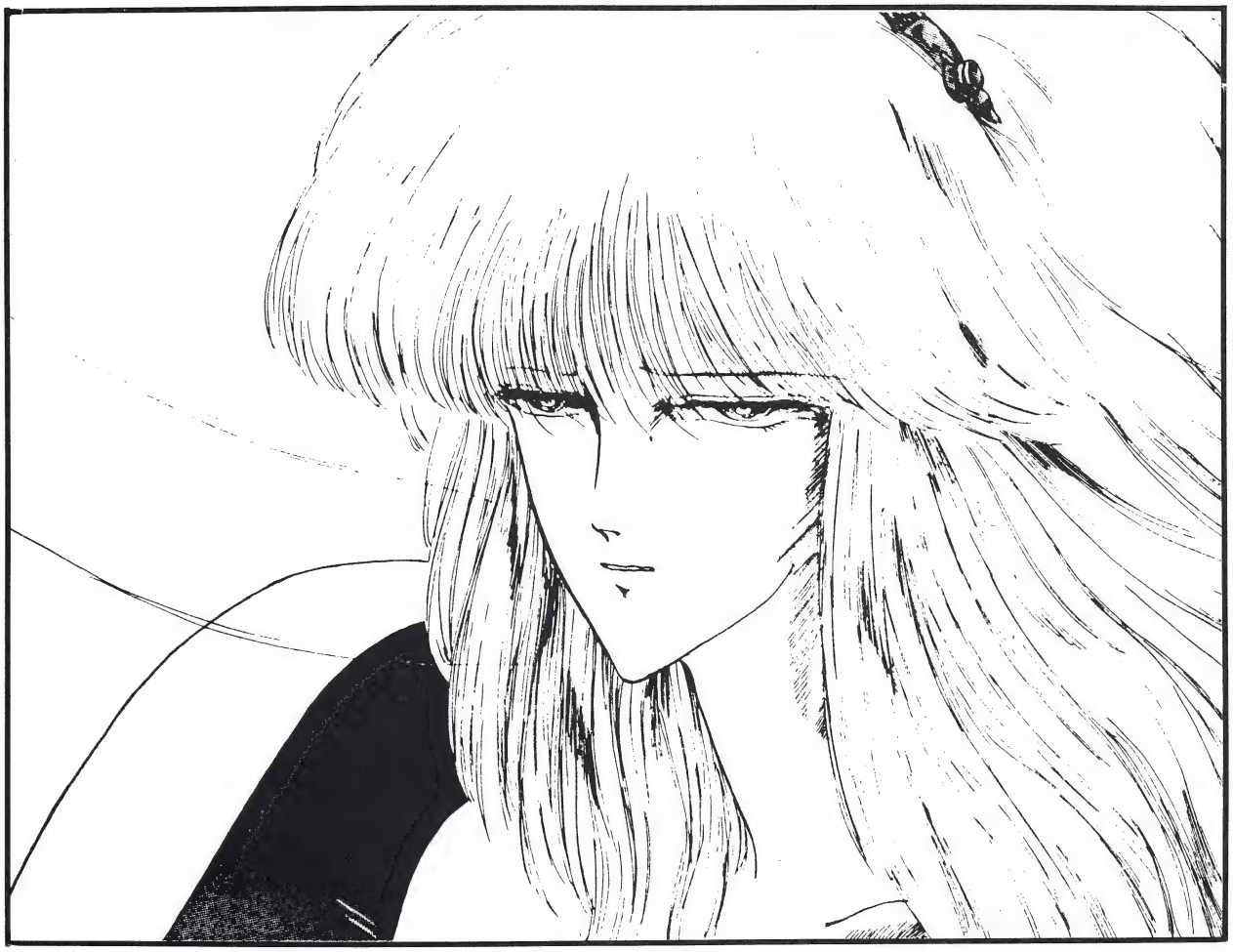
Orbiting the northern star is Kalamity Goderce. Three major governments are located here: Philmore is ruled by Ledar the VIII and his Kneue Syltis Knights; Coballkan Sutra is ruled by King Spanda; and Umos Kingdom is governed by King Muckle. Kalamity is added to the A.K.D. in 3333.

In addition, there is one other government not based anywhere in particular—the S.P.I., lead by Robile Lace, the government that is everywhere, but nowhere. Little else is known about the S.P.I. but they do seem to have ties with Bustogne's Lent government.



Float Temple

PROLOGUE



The tale of *Five Star Stories* opens in rather unique fashion—the end of the tale is presented as a prologue to the events that follow.

In the Southerned star system on the planet of Juno, the last knight of the Trio de Colus battles with a warlord of the A.K.D., F.E.M.C. No. 32, Karel Crysalis. It is late January of the Universal Stellar Calendar (USC) 3960, one week after the end of the war in which the planet Juno was conquered by Amaterasu, after the defeat of their king, Colus V. The Black Knight, Sir Grard Sydmian, realizes that it is futile to continue the resistance. Even the citizens marvel that the fighting still continues, yet Sydmian fights on to avenge the death of his lord.

With most of their weapons gone, the two adversaries remain at a standoff. The battle has taken its toll on both man and machine. Sydmian comments, "I'll have to clean this place (the mortar headd cockpit) up. It's full of sweat and urine!" Est, Sydmian's fatima, informs her master that the elapsed time of the battle now exceeds 65 hours and 38 minutes.

Jettisoning all of the excess armor on his Led Mirage, Crysalis prepares for his final attack on the Black Knight. The Led Mirage launches into the air, striking the Black Knight with a beam saber. The nimble Black Knight easily blocks the blow and severs the Led Mirage's sword hand with his own beam saber. Crysalis' strategy has worked, however; energizing his nail (a spine protruding from the visor on the Led Mirage's head), Crysalis uses momentum to carry the nail through the control cabin of the Black Knight and fatally wound Sydmian. With much regret, Crysalis bids farewell to his valiant enemy and returns to the forces of the A.K.D.

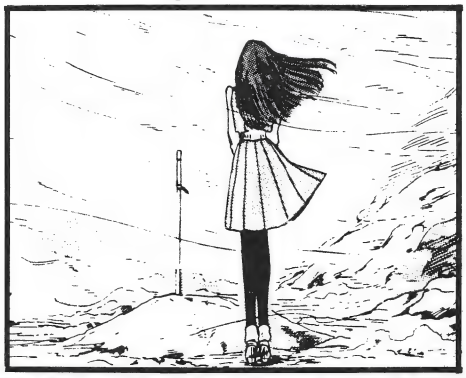
Three thousands meters above the surface of Delta Belune in Float Temple, Amaterasu receives the news of the Black Knight's fall. Now, all the worlds of the Five Star Constellation are under his control. Amidst the rejoicing people of Delta Belune, their melancholy leader reminisces to his fatima, Atrophos.

"I've lost too many friends,Ballanche, Aisha, Rogner, Colus III . . . and Lachesis, she is no longer with me."

Back on Juno, the Black Knight dies before his fatima, Est. She is heartbroken and after burying her master, stands before the Black Knight's mortar headd, the Vatsu, saying, "I do not want to leave the master. I don't want to be alone anymore. We will both stay here with the master." Entering the mortar headd, Est seals herself inside and goes to sleep, never to wake again, with only the wind to bear witness.

A sad epitaph is given for Juno. *"In the year 3960, the Joker Systems were taken by the forces of Amaterasu des Grand Adas. In the 900 years of war, 700 nations were suppressed, but now an air of calmness pervades in these nations. Amaterasu has become the first Star King, the king of the Joker Systems. This, though, is a thing not all of the citizens will accept. But with the loss of Lachesis, how will Amaterasu rule? After this event, many headliners disappeared into time, but were not lost. The story which is to follow deals with the brighter days before all of this ...."*

End Prologue—Juno 3960



The Story: Destiny Three Fates - Destiny Lachesis, Addler 2988

At the home of Dr. Chrome Ballanche, Fatima Fortune No. 44, Lachesis, awakens after Ezlazer System processing.

On Delta Belune, Amaterasu hears Lachesis calling for him. Unable to resist the lure, Amaterasu decides to go to Addler.

The Knight of Gold, Ladios Sopp's mortar headd, plummets from Addler's skies during its first test flight. With his mortar headd downed, Sopp is forced to walk to the home of his friend, Dr. Ballanche, and on the way meets a man who offers him a lift. The man mistakes Sopp for a beautiful woman and when corrected, is disappointed but is able to laugh it off good-naturedly. He introduces himself as Voards Viewlard, a headliner of the Tran Federation, and presents his spud as proof of rank (only nobles or headliners may carry spuds, a beam saber, much like the samurai of traditional Japan). Voards explains that he has been hired by the King of Bustogne, Uber, to provide security for an upcoming fatima impression.

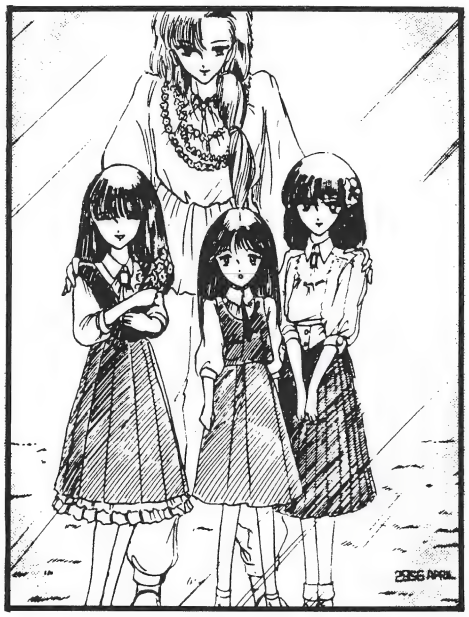
The famous Dr. Ballanche has not produced a fatima in twelve years, Voards explains. In five days, two of his latest (and rumored best) creations will undergo impression, a ceremony in which a fatima chooses a master. Many of the kings, nobles, and headliners of the Joker Systems are intrigued by Ballanche's reputation and coming to Bustogne to witness the ceremony. Voards drops Sopp off near Dr. Ballanche's home and continues on to Bustogne, extending an invitation to Sopp to stay at the palace, if Sopp should decide to attend.

It seems that a nervous Uber has come to Ballanche's home and forcibly taken possession of the fatimas Clotho and Lachesis. Ballanche believes Uber will somehow try to tamper with the ceremony, and asks Sopp to see that Clotho and Lachesis get to "rightful" headliners. If the fatimas do not make their lawful choice, Ballanche explains, they will by default become the property of their host—Uber.

Ballanche tells Sopp that although fatimas are normally provided with thought limiters, which prohibit them from choosing any non-headliner master, the three sisters have no such restrictions. Sopp is surprised and asks about the location of Atrophos.

"Oh, she woke up a year ago," responds Ballanche. "I let her slip away quietly." Sopp picks up and gazes at a picture taken ten years ago of himself and the three young sisters. Sopp's recollection of a promise made long ago convinces him to honor Ballanche's request.

On his way to Bustogne, Sopp sees a starship of the F.E.M.C. bringing Amaterasu to the impending impression. Upon arrival in



Bustogne, Sopp presents himself to King Uber and theCaptain of the Guard. Uber, impressed by Sopp's reputation, offers him a position as his meister, a mortar headd technician.

Taking a break in the palace foyer, Voards Viewlard joins Sopp and together, they watch the influx of noble personages. Tempers are high and two attending nobles prepare to due. Before they can cross swords, a sharp voice commands them to stop.

All turn to witness Amaterasu des Grand Adas with four of her F.E.M.C. Temple Knights. The beauty of Amaterasu contrasts sharply with the hideous "fade viels" worn by the F.E.M.C. Knights (the fade viel is a space helmet covered by the skull of the beast lecaron, and gives the wearer the image of a death's head). At the urging of Amaterasu, the two nobles agree to put aside their differences in the name of neutrality, an essential element for a proper impression ceremony.

After all the nobles arrive, Voards suggests they take a break to show Ladios Sopp his mortar head, the Branji. A disturbance outside the hangar interrupts Voards' lecture. Clotho has escaped her guards, leaping over the palace wall and making a break for Ballanche's estate. The fatima quickly out distances her pursuers, racing across the desert at astonishing 150 kph.

Clotho enters a small town and is spotted by a group of opportunistic young men. "Look, a fatima," one says. "Maybe if we take her to a headliner, we'll get a reward." They corner her and taunt, "Hey doll, come here." (The term "doll" is used as a derogatory name for a fatima.) The leader calmly begins to suffocate Clotho. A mysterious cloaked stranger rescues her with one quick, deadly draw of his sword. Ladios Sopp and Voards Viewlard soon arrive on the scene.

Clotho's rescuer identifies himself as King Colus III. Sopp is surprised by Colus' presence. As Clotho comes to, she mistakes the hazy face above her as Colus VI. "Master, " she exclaims to everyone's surprise.

Much like a marriage proposal, Colus asks Clotho to be his fatima. Clotho happily agrees to "marry" him—most fatimas refer to their masters as their husband. This "impresssion" is witnessed by four members of the F.E.M.C.—Land Waund Sppacorn, Lie Ex, Poesche Nomien, and Nu, Suoad Graphite.

Suddenly, the street is full of soldiers and diggs (anti-gravitational car-like vehicles). Byoit, Captain of the Palace Guard, asks Colus for Clotho's return. Byoit is concerned that Uber's "show" will be ruined by a conspicuous lack of fatimas.

Viewlard informs Byoit that Clotho's impression has already taken place. Byoit protests as Sppacorn interrupts to explain that by law, if three people of knight status witness an impression, it is legal. Since Viewlard is a headliner, five knights have witnessed the impression. Byoit is upset but manages to ask if Colus III will at least stay through the ceremony.

Clotho expresses concern for her sister Lachesis, and asks Sopp if he will take Lachesis as his fatima. Sopp promises nothing, and with Viewlard, bids farewell to the new couple. Two cloaked figures pass by them. Clotho smiles waves to them.

Colus is amused and says, "You must know everything, Clotho."

That evening at the palace, Clotho's words return to Sopp. In his mind he sees a vision of the young Lachesis.

"Lachesis," he mumbles, his head bowed, "Sorry. I can't."

In a show of power, Uber brings in an air dory (a small, armed mortar headd transport), carrying his three personal mortar headds. They are introduced as the Helmine (lead suit), the Devonshire (sunken face), and the Ballanshire (triangle face), piloted by Decors Weissmel. Uber introduces Weissmel as his nephew. Viewlard, however, suspects that Uber is lying. "There can't be any headliner blood in his family," he says. Uber asks Colus III to show the people how well his fatima works. Tugging at her master's arm, Clotho quietly confesses that she hates and fears mortar headds. Colus is jarred by the revelation of a pacifistic fatima and tells Uber, "Perhaps another time."

"This is the way a headliner talks," chides Uber, still upset at the loss of Clotho. Amaterasu interrupts the tension that building between the two men with a request for a demonstration of Uber's mortar headd.

Later in the day, during routine maintenance on Uber's mortar headd, Sopp and Viewlard discover something curious. Uber's mortar headd does not use a fatima but rather, a low-grade, non-humanoid version called an etriml, which can provide only minimal operational abilities to a mortar headd.

While enjoying a snack with some of Viewlard's friends from the Lent government, Sopp ask why he has not seen Voards' fatima. "My fatima? . . .Well, maybe some other time." Sopp's thoughts drift back to happier times on Addler.

The three fatima sisters, Clotho, Lachesis and Atrophos, are making necklaces out of posies, which they present to Sopp. Ballanche comments on how cute they all seem together. Sopp confesses to Ballanche that seeing the sisters like this makes it hard to believe that they are not human, and that it is terrible that they will have to die and fight.

Sopp promises that one day he will build a mortar headd which does not require a fatima. The young Lachesis asks him if she may have two wishes, and he agrees. First, Lachesis wants to marry Sopp, and second, she wishes him to build a shining mortar headd out of gold, in front of which to hold their wedding.

The next day Sopp supervises the delivery of supplies on the palace roof. Weissmel visits Sopp and propositions him. Sopp demurs and Weissmel leaves, promising to visit again later.

Sopp glances across the courtyard and for the first time in ten years, sees Lachesis. A wave of visions floods Sopp's mind . . . .

The Knight of Gold in battle / Colus III cradling his dead fatima, Uricl, while F.U. Rogner and his fatima, Eatta, look on / A wounded Amaterasu / The Knight of Gold in battle / The Knight of Gold suspended within a chamber / The Patrashire Mirage / King Colus VI in full battle gear / King Colus VI and his wife, Dizanna Meistner / The Knight of Gold and Lachesis / Destiny Lachesis / The Emblam / Lachesis as a freedom fighter/ The destroyed Knight of Gold . . . .

On the eve of the impression, Uber and Byoit plot to gain control of Lachesis. Lachesis protests but is powerless. Outside the door to Uber's apartments, the Mirage Knights are unceremoniously discovered spying, where they had gathered in hopes of finding something incriminating to use against him. Amaterasu apologizes for his knights' conduct and begs forgiveness. Uber slyly suggests that there might be a way the "injustice" could be rectified. Outside the window, a spying Sopp thinks to himself, "Uber, you're getting too cocky. Your life won't last much longer, I think!"

Back in his apartment, Sopp takes a shower. Voards Viewlard comes in search of his friend. Viewlard sees Sopp's clothes on a chair and hears the shower running. He cannot resist taking a peek. "You really are a boy," he screams.

After he regains his composure, Viewlard tells Sopp why he came. Seven of his knights from Lent have arrived. Viewlard also lets Sopp know he is aware of Sopp's feelings for Lachesis, and offers to help if he can. Sopp thanks him, and apologizes for not being able to thank him in the manner he might desire. Viewlard laughs it off. "Will you stop looking at me like that? It could get dangerous in here." Viewlard departs as a mysterious robed figure watches from the shadows.

At long last, the day of Lachesis' impression has arrived. The nobles and headliners crowd into the main hall, standing room only. Viewlard, acting as "father of the bride," presents Lachesis to the assembly.

Lachesis meets all of the headliners but none are suitable, not even the great Amaterasu. Voards asks Lachesis if she has chosen someone who is not here, but Lachesis sadly shakes her head no.

Ladios Sopp walks from the palace with full intention of turning his back on Lachesis when he is confronted by the ghost of his first wife, Rittler.

"Are you running away again?" she asks. "Could it be you don't want to admit that you are in love with a fatima? But no, how can this be, you cannot love anyone. You like playing with the feelings of others, and yet you fear the love of a fatima." Sopp is speechless as Rittler delivers her *coup de grâce*. "An artificial being and a cold-blooded man—I would liked to have seen it." The spectral Rittler disappears. Her words have struck home. Sopp runs back toward the palace.

In the hall, Uber announces that since Lachesis has not made a choice, another impression will be held at a later date. Sopp bursts into the hall. "Lachesis, come here!"

The elated Lachesis flies into Sopp's waiting arms, whispering "master" over and over in a trembling voice. Uber becomes enraged, thinking that the fatima is defective because she picked a non-headliner master, and orders Lachesis and Sopp killed. Colus III tells the people to let the two pass as they flee from the palace. The pursuing guards are stopped in their tracks by a cloaked figure. "This road is closed," the figure menances. "Find another route." The guards decide to take the figure's advice. Sopp and Lachesis use the diversion to steal an armed digg and speed out across the desert.

In the palace, a furious Uber orders Byoit to go to Ballanche's estate and kill Ballanche for all the trouble he has put him through. Uber boards his air dorey and flies off in pursuit of Sopp and Lachesis.

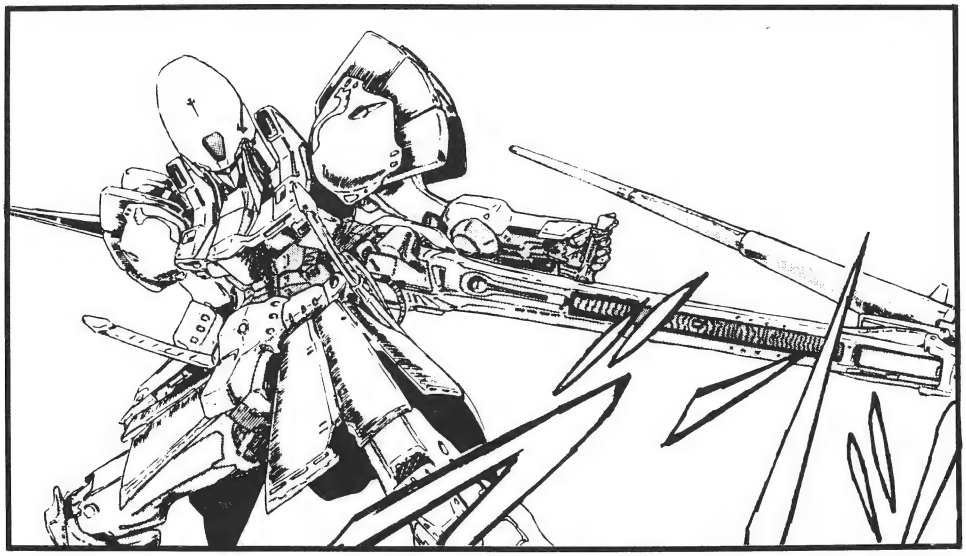
Voards is also about to leave when the cloaked figure approaches him and says, "Stay here. Your nation needs you. Besides, Uber will not return." The figure then reveals himself to be F.U. Rogner, F.E.M.C. No. 4. The woman with him is his fatima, Eatta (Ballanche Fatima No. 7). Voards is disappointed. It seems that everyone recognized his "Viewlard" persona as Mission Routh all along. Voards has not, however, lost his sense of humor. "Sopp!" he screams comically after the fleeing pair, "I love you!"

Uber's troops, lead by Byoit, arrive at the estate of Dr. Ballanche. Ballanche has been expecting him. A contingent of

Amaterasu's personal guards quickly dispatches Byoit's troops and their leader. Land Waund Sppacorn takes great pleasure in personally killing Byoit.

Meanwhile, Uber's air dory destroys Sopp's digg and forces Sopp and Lachesis to flee into the desert on foot. The air dory draws closer to the helpless pair as Uber disembarks his mortar headd team.

Targeting the air dory, Sopp lowers the mortar headd's protective eye cover and fires his weapon. The resulting blast not only destroys the air dory and Uber's mortar headd, but leaves a tear in the fabric of the space/time continuum, which looms like a dark cloud in the sky above Addler. Climbing out of the control cockpit, Lachesis turns around to regard the mortar headd. "You



After Dr. Ballanche's estate has been secured, Aisha Codante, aka Amaterasu, confesses to Dr. Ballanche that she loves Ladios Sopp, even though she knows Sopp loves only Lachesis. Throwing herself into Ballanche's arms, the heartbroken Aisha knows that her love will never be returned. Dr. Ballanche apologizes for creating Lachesis, for he knows this will not be the first sad event connected to the Fatima Fortune.

Back in the desert, Sopp searches the dunes frantically. "I know it was one of these hills," he says. As Uber's troops draw nearer, Sopp says, "Because the Knight of Gold crashed here, I got to meet this nation's president." Lachesis is confused by Sopp's words.

"Knight of Gold, it is now time to wake up." The majestic mortar headd rises enigma-like from the sand.

Weissmel is unimpressed for he believes that a mortar headd made of gold cannot be an effective weapon. He soon finds out that he could not be more wrong as the Knight of Gold easily severs the Ballanshire in two. Uber fears that he will be next and orders the air dory to use its buster cannon to destroy the Knight of Gold.

Lachesis informs her master that the air dory's buster cannon is charging. Sopp tells her to begin charging the Knight of Gold's own buster launcher which, being half the size of a normal buster launcher, charges more quickly but less accurately.

remembered!" she exclaims. "You made a golden mortar headd for me just like you promised!"

Aisha interrupts this reunion via communicator. "Sir Sopp, are you all right? Get back here and run your kingdom!" She teases Sopp about his ruffled appearance. "And by the way, you look so good!" Sopp asks Aisha if she is jealous. Aisha's mocking reply causes a ripple of laughter all around.

Suddenly Lachesis notices something startling. "Master . . . your hair . . . ." Sopp's hair is now purple instead of blond. When he turns around, Lachesis finds herself looking into the red eyes of Amaterasu Des Grand Adas of Mikado. Amaterasu passionately kisses Lachesis and says, "What's wrong, Lachesis? I love you, my lovely Lachesis." In the skies above, Rittler looks down upon the scene and approves. She then vanishes, never to appear again.

Lachesis points to the horizon. "Look, master!" The battleship *Bell Karlle* is approaching, and will return Amaterasu and Lachesis to Float Temple.

In the year 2988, Lachesis joined Amaterasu. Now begins his war of conquest and journey. A journey as a God of Light."

So ends the tale of Destiny Lachesis.

Next Issue: Book II—Clotho, the Sleeping Witch—and a special look at the Colus family and the Black Knight. Also, a history of the A.K.D.

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Osamu Tezuka

The Storyteller, the Artist, and the Man

By Frederik L. Schodt

Frederik L. Schodt is the author of *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics* (Kodansha International, 1983) and *Inside the Robot Kingdom: Japan, Mechatronics, and the Coming Robotopia* (Kodansha International, 1988).
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Osamu Tezuka died on the morning of February 9th of this year, at the age of sixty. His death never made more than a brief mention in a few U.S. newspapers, but in Japan it created quite a stir. He lived almost exactly the length of the Showa emperor's reign, but many people seemed far more shocked by his death than that of the emperor who only preceded him by a few weeks. The emperor had lingered on so long, and was so old, that when his death finally came it was almost anticlimactic. Tezuka took everyone by surprise.

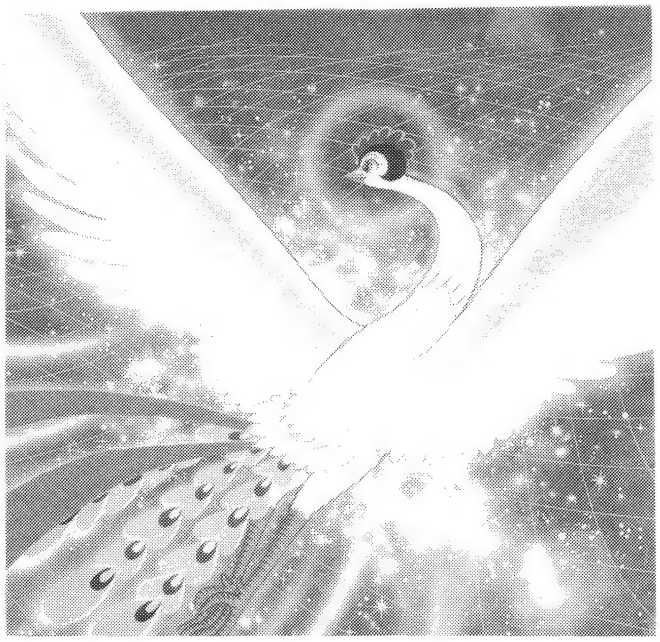
Who was Osamu Tezuka? In Japan he was variously referred to as the "god of comics" or even the "god of animation." When introduced to ignorant foreigners the appellation "the Walt Disney of Japan" was often tacked on, as if this somehow explained everything. In reality Tezuka was entirely different from Disney. He was largely a failure as a businessman and manager. He was first and foremost a storyteller, who generated ideas and plots as easily as some people breathe. And he was a gifted artist. With these talents he pioneered the "story-comic"—the long (often thousands of pages), intricate novelistic form of comics that are the mainstay of Japanese manga today, and which rely heavily on so-called "cinematic techniques." He was, in a very real sense, the father of Japan's huge contemporary comics and animation culture.

From his debut in 1946 until his death this year, Tezuka drew constantly. He was abnormally productive. Among the works he created for boys, girls, and adults are the famous robot science fiction classic, *Tetsuwan Atom* ("Mighty Atom," or *Astro Boy*); one of the first girls' comics, *Ribon no Kishi* ("Princess Knight"); my all-time favorite, the long, raga-like story of karma and reincarnation, *Hi no Tori* ("The Phoenix"); and the recent winner of the Kodansha Manga Award, *Adolf ni Tsugu* ("Tell Adolf").

But Tezuka was far more than a comic artist. He was also a pioneer in animation. He created Japan's first commercial TV animation series and made scores of other TV series and theatrical features. At the time of his death, his company was creating a series of animated Bible stories for the Vatican and Italian television. Animation was more than a commercial venture for Tezuka. As he often joked, comics were his wife, animation his mistress. The money he made from comics he often lost on animation projects. Many were completely non-commercial, and fell into the experimental category, an example being the humorous short, *Broken Down Film*, which has recently been given fairly wide exposure at animation screenings in the U.S. As if that weren't enough, Tezuka was also a film critic, writing a regular column on movies in *Kinema Junpo*, a screen magazine. And he was something of a celebrity. Somehow, no matter how busy, he always seemed to find time to make an appearance at a comic or animation-related event. He even advertised word processors on television.

But what was Tezuka like as a person? I had a unique opportunity to get to know him quite well, and grew to admire him not only as an artist, but as a man. He became, in a very real way, my mentor, and encouraged

Hi No Tori

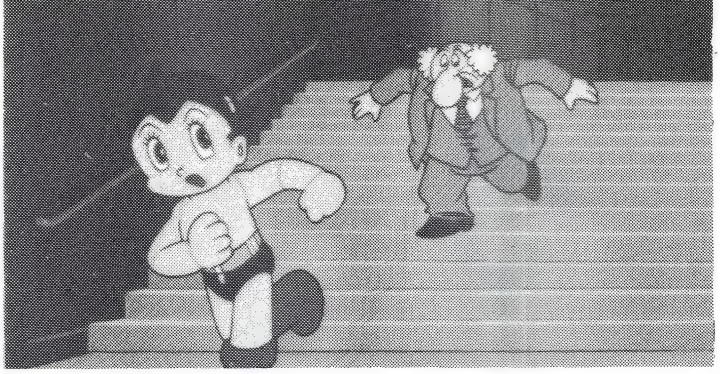


and helped me considerably in my career as a writer. I first met him in 1976-77, when a friend and I translated *The Phoenix*. Over the years I had the honor of working as his interpreter during several trips to the United States and Canada. In this position I was with him nearly twenty-four hours a day for extended periods, and thus had ample opportunity to separate the man from the myth.

I was probably one of the few people other than Tezuka's wife and manager to see him without a beret. He always wore it. Berets were almost de rigueur for artists in early postwar Japan, and as Tezuka became more and more famous, and as he began to lose more of his hair, the beret became not only a trademark, but a semi-permanent wig-like fixture on his head. It was a little vanity of his, and one of his many endearing, childlike qualities. He only took it off when he went to sleep.

He was also one of the best conversationalists I ever met. In addition to being a comic artist/animator, Tezuka was a licensed physician and a highly educated, well-read man. He could hold a discussion on nearly any subject with nearly anyone, and if listening is the art of being a good conversationalist, he perfected it. He constantly asked questions and never forgot the answers. He could quote back to me things I had once said years earlier, almost verbatim. There was never any chance to be bored with Tezuka; he was a bundle of curiosity. There was reason for this, of course. He was constantly writing three or four stories in his head, and he needed as much information as possible to keep them going. As a result, he was an information sponge. And his memory wasn't all aural, either. What he saw, he recorded with a near-photographic memory. Often, similar scenes would later be adapted later in his comics.

Tezuka had a remarkable way of communicating with people, whether they were five years old, or fifty, whether they were construction workers or intellectuals. He threw temper tantrums regularly with his staff and probably his family, but in public he was always kind and gentle, with an engaging manner and a ready smile. He never talked down to anyone, and if words didn't work, he could always communicate by drawing a picture. In fact, he was such a pushover for fans that he was constantly abused by them. After a public talk or appearance, he was always deluged with requests for autographs and, much to the irritation of those in charge of his schedule, he would oblige, usually drawing a detailed picture of one of his characters as a "special service for the fans . . . ." Sometimes Tezuka would privately grumble and complain when things didn't go right, but he could also be remarkably forgiving. Once, on the way to a film festival in Canada, when I was essentially in charge of his schedule, I became so engrossed in a conversation with him that I didn't notice that our airplane had left the gate. He took it all in stride. He was a Buddhist, and a humanist at heart, and well aware of the imperfections of his fellow man.



Tetsuwan Atom

Tezuka's dynamism was legendary, and the legend was deserved. In fact, given his typical schedule, it is remarkable that he lived as long as he did, and I can only attribute his longevity to the fact that as a physician, he was able to constantly monitor his own health. Until fairly recently, he normally slept around four or five hours a night and still had enough energy and enthusiasm about everything that he could wear much younger people into the ground. As is true of most of the top manga artists in Japan, he used assistants to help fill in backgrounds and details, but he relied on them far less than many of his peers in the industry. I remember a time in Florida when, for a TV special, he retreated early to his hotel room late at night with paper, pencils and ink. Sure enough, early in the morning, he had his quota of pages done, ready for shipping to Japan for a final touch-up at his company before going to the printer. He had done them while I was asleep, and they were all beautifully penciled, inked, and nearly complete.

Because Tezuka was such a human dynamo, because he became so famous, and because he had such a childlike curiosity about everything, he tended to take on far more work than he actually should have, and as a result was probably the manga artist in Japan that editors feared, or hated, the most. He often neglected deadlines until the last minute, and like many famous Japanese comic artists became used to having his own staff and editors hound him. It became an essential part of his daily routine. Once, when visiting San Francisco, he began enjoying himself too much and an editor had to be flown out from Japan to apply pressure on him. Protocol required the editor to use great tact with an older, famous artist/writer, and be very circumspect. But the deadline grew nearer and nearer, and the editor became so visibly agitated he looked as though he was about to hemorrhage internally. Only at the very last minute was he able to corral Tezuka, force him to retreat to his hotel room, and make him complete the minimum number of pages required to save the magazine from disaster. Sure enough, the editor finally flew back to Tokyo with the work, cursing, but relieved.

It is no wonder Tezuka's death sent shock waves through people under fifty in Japan. Almost everyone had been reared on his comics or animation and many are still enjoying his latest creations for adults. They had seen him regularly in the media throughout their adult lives. Even most young children knew him: nearly all elementary school students today compete at school athletic meets to accompaniment of the theme song to the *Tetsuwan Atom* animation series, and know the words by heart.

It was all the more difficult to comprehend Tezuka's death because he always seemed to be so superhuman. Following Japanese medical custom of not telling patients they have a fatal illness, there was never any public acknowledgment of the gravity of his illness. Of course, as a physician Tezuka was fully aware, I'm sure, of what was going on. But he kept up the charade to the end. I received the regular New Year's card from him in January, and thought his writing looked a little weak. I also saw a photograph of him in a magazine, and worried because he looked unusually gaunt. But I had no idea he had stomach cancer.

The night Tezuka died, old friends began contacting me from Japan by telephone and facsimile machine to share the news, and I hardly slept at all. Many people were clearly quite distraught, and I know why. Tezuka gave people in Japan and the world an enormous legacy of dreams and ideas, but as is the case with John Lennon, it was impossible not to speculate on what he could have produced with a little more time. Until the very end his mind must have been filled with wonderful stories, just waiting to be put to paper. Somehow, I think we all felt a little cheated. ■

DOMINION

What Could Be More Touching than the Sight of a Girl and Her Tank?

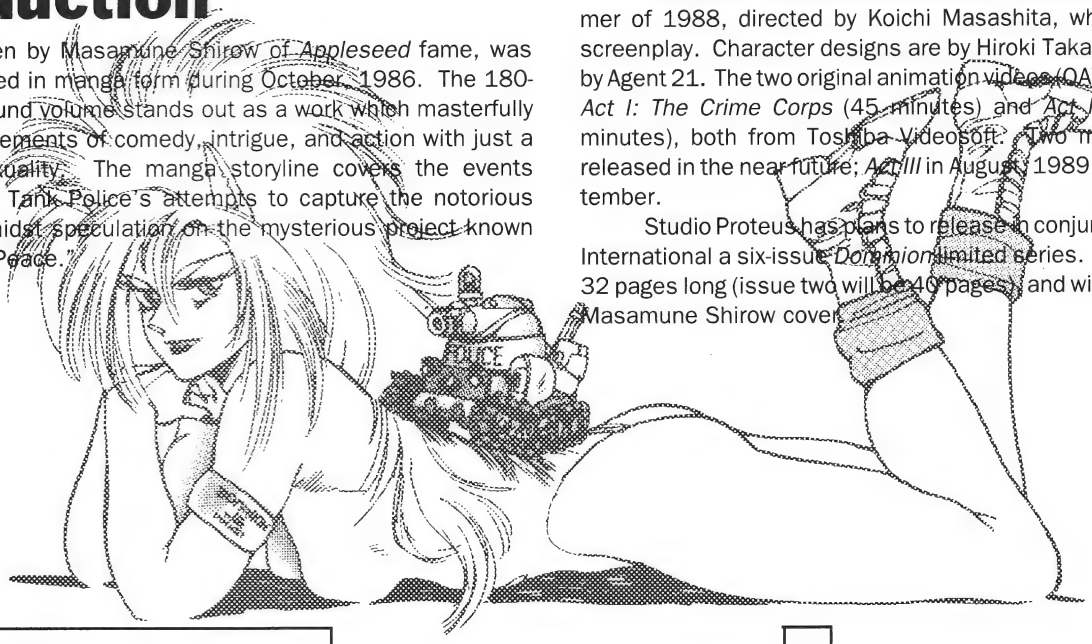
By Andy Kim, James E. Christiansen and Grant Kono

Introduction

Dominion, written by Masamune Shirow of *Appleseed* fame, was originally released in manga form during October, 1986. The 180-page perfect bound volume stands out as a work which masterfully combines the elements of comedy, intrigue, and action with just a hint of wily sexuality. The manga storyline covers the events surrounding the Tank Police's attempts to capture the notorious Buaku gang, amidst speculation on the mysterious project known only as "Green Peace."

The series was later animated and released during the summer of 1988, directed by Koichi Masashita, who also wrote the screenplay. Character designs are by Hiroki Takagi, and production by Agent 21. The two original animation videos (OAVs) to date include *Act I: The Crime Corps* (45 minutes) and *Act II: Crime War* (40 minutes), both from Toshiba Videosoft. Two more OAVs will be released in the near future; *Act III* in August, 1989, and *Act IV* in September.

Studio Proteus has plans to release in conjunction with Eclipse International a six-issue *Dominion* limited series. Each issue will be 32 pages long (issue two will be 40 pages), and will boast an original Masamune Shirow cover.



Act I: The Crime Corps

Prologue

In Earth's distant future, the atmosphere is contaminated by a deadly biological cloud so poisonous the people must wear gas masks just to survive day to day. As the atmosphere is tainted, so are mankind's ambitions—the crime rate so high that a murder, rape or robbery occurs once every 36 seconds. Desperate times calling for desperate measures, a special SWAT division is created by the Newport City council . . . the Tank Police.

In the mayor's office, the Mayor and the Chief of the Tank Police heatedly discuss the Tank Police's public image. "Why is it that you always seems to end up terrorizing the people you're charged with protecting?"

The Chief retorts that the civilian casualties incurred by the Tank Police account for only 5% of all deaths due to accidents and biological poisoning. "Besides," the Chief adds curtly, "the crime rate's dropped by 20%—you should be thanking us." The Tank Police was created three years ago, and in the Chief's interpretation of the law, the safety of the masses is more important than the protection of a few citizens.

"You're supposed to protect *everyone*!" screams the Mayor.

Would she force a surgeon to save every drop of blood while trying to excise a malignancy? asks the Chief. If the surgeon could not guarantee this, would the Mayor cancel the operation because the patient's rights have been compromised? "Are you just going to be a spectator while the world dies from cancer?"

"I never said, 'Don't operate.'"

"Damn right! This operation was initiated three years ago."

Trying to recover her composure, the Mayor ask the Chief not to operate as if he were using a chain saw. A surgeon would use a properly disinfected scalpel and minimize the loss of blood. "Our civilization doesn't stand a chance when being operated on by a tank!"

The Chief blames the politicians for giving the "surgeons" such ineffective tools as tanks. With the current crime rate, the Chief says, a tank is nearly as effective as a toothpick. When asked what kind of equipment the police should have, the Chief's response is typical. "Well, instead of a gun, I'd send out a patrol with a nuclear weapon!"

"N-nuclear weapon?"

LEONA

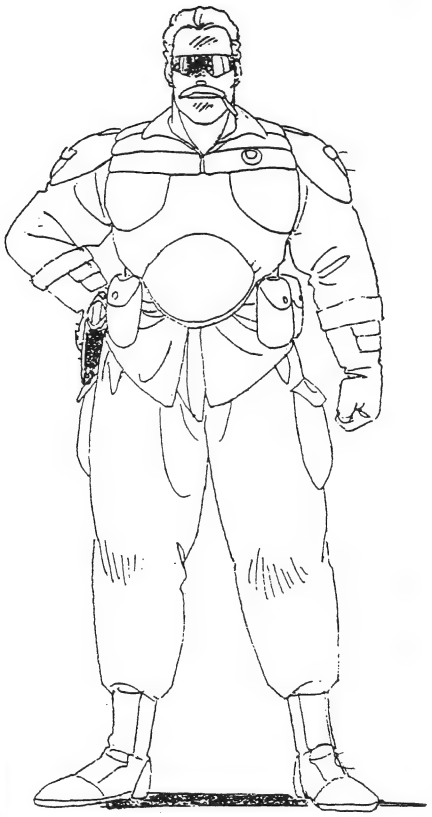
Leona is a quick-tempered, red-haired tank commander. She is the newest member of the Tank Police, only recently transferred from motorcycle duty, and is in love with her tank, Bonaparte.

AL

He is Leona's partner and the pilot of Bonaparte. Calm and cool, at times Al seems to be the only member of the Tank Police who is not wholly motivated by emotion. Although Leona doesn't seem to acknowledge him as a male, Al loves her.

BONAPARTE

The tough little tank manned by Leona and Al, armed with a cannon and a vulcan pod.



BRITTEN

The police inspector in charge of the Tank Police. Always referred to by his personnel as "Mr. Squad Commander," Britten is tough as nails and only slightly psychotic.

"Nuclear weapons are effective on the battlefield, and they should be equally effective in deterring urban crime! However," the Chief adds sadly, "I still don't expect that crime would be eradicated."

The Chief continues, the Mayor shocked into silence. "You politicians gave us the tanks and told us to fight the bad guys. I'm well aware that the detective whose work brought about the formation of the Tank Police also exposed the incompetence of the judicial system. But, the law is the law!" The Tank Police don't want the tenets of the law changed; instead, in every way, they want more tanks to do a more efficient job.

"Don't you understand?" he cries, impassioned. "This is full-fledged war!"

Putting the Terror Back into Interrogation

An ambulance roars down the streets of Newport City, sirens ablaze. Inside Boss Buaku, leader of the notorious Buaku gang, plots with his partners Annapuna and Yunipuma against their latest victim—Newport City's Special Research Hospital. Boss Buaku uses a ruse to gain entry into the hospital, the Boss playacting the patient in critical condition to the sisters' "Florence Nightingales."

A doctor examines the Boss, remarking that this isn't a regular hospital, but one for healthy people only. Although the doctor blames the strange sight on his analysis screen as a malfunction, he soon sees the light: he's been taken in by the old "machine-gun-in-the-phoney-cast" trick.

At Tank Police headquarters, some of the boys are busy "interrogating" a prisoner. Mohican, Shimpu, Megane and Al are trying their best to put the terror back into interrogation. A prisoner is tied to a post, a grenade stuffed into his mouth. A string is fastened to the grenade's pin, which is attached to a bucket at his feet. Mohican and Megane take turns during their game of "grenade golf" to putt into the bucket, while Shimpu advises the prisoner, "Have love for your friends! Going to prison with your friends rather than going to heaven by yourself will please God!"

Megane urges Al to take a shot, and be sure to hit it hard! Al worries, asking the division leader and tank fanatic, Captain Britten, if they're allowed to do this. The Captain turns a blind eye to their sport and buries himself in the latest issue of *How to Kill!* magazine.

Pin intact, a stray putt from the game hits the Tank Police's newest recruit in the eye. Leona Ozaki, just transferred in, tosses Al's grenade back gently . . . and scores a hole in one. The bucket tips over, the string tugging the pin loose in the suspect's mouth, who frantically spits out the grenade as the rope around his neck begins to strangle him.

"Now you've really done it!" Britten shouts. Leona points at the sight of the prisoner being throttled and laughs, as the explosion rocks Tank Police headquarters.

DOMINION

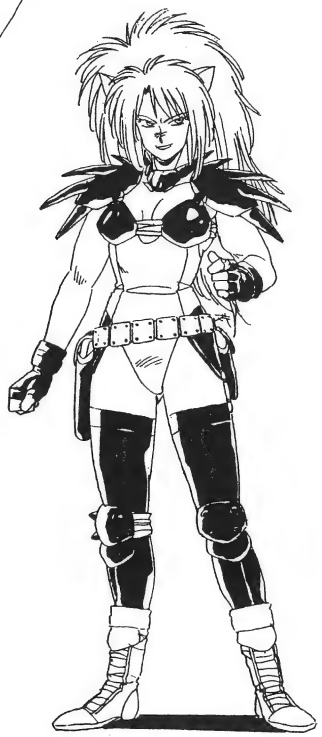
CHARACTERS

CHIEF

Britten's boss and the man voted most likely to get an earful from the Mayor. He is prone to fits due to the frequent, uncontrollable actions of the Tank Police.

BUAKU

The boss of a no holds barred gang of bandits intent on making all kinds of mischief for the Tank Police. Buaku has artificial eyes and an artificial right arm. He is enamored of his two companions, Annapuna and Yunipuma.



ANNAPUMA

Two sisters who have been bio-engineered for cat-like characteristics (including temperament). They are expert commandos, skilled in the use of all types of weapons and the operation of many types of vehicles, including tanks. The only way to tell this sexy pair apart is that Annapuna has slightly longer ears.

YUNIPUMA

Upstairs . . . "Britten!" the Chief screams.

Across town at the hospital, Boss Buaku's gang has found the quarry at last. In an eerie room filled with listless patients the gang secures several small containers of a colorless liquid. They make a quick exit from the room, the patients watching apathetically.

Their getaway is delayed by the waiting SWAT blockade. The sisters create a diversion—a racy striptease—and as the SWAT team watches slack-jawed, Annapuna and Yunipuma open fire. The trio races off in their ambulance.

Al, Leona and Captain Britten are patrolling the streets in Britten's customized tank. "That prisoner confessed," Britten says, "and gave us the names of his accomplices. He even admitted to several other crimes!"

"The Chief was really upset," Leona says.

"Don't worry about it. He's always like that."

"Is it usual for the Tank Police to torture people?" Leona asks.

Britten's pride is wounded. "It's not torture, it's the Tank Police's traditional interrogation technique!"

An emergency plea for help comes from the SWAT unit at the hospital. Britten replies that he can't be bothered, he's orienting a rookie.

"You're not going to respond?"

"SWAT calls us for every little problem. Let 'em handle it. Besides, in Newport City a crime occurs every 36 seconds. The purpose of patrolling is to make sure it doesn't drop below 35 seconds." Leona begins to recite from the Tank Police's official manual. Britten cuts her off.

"That's a typical statement from a greenhorn who hasn't seen any real action yet. If we respond to every single incident, my tank would get scratched." Britten pauses before imparting a great Tank Police secret to her. "In real combat, more importantly than anything else, it's important to love your tank."

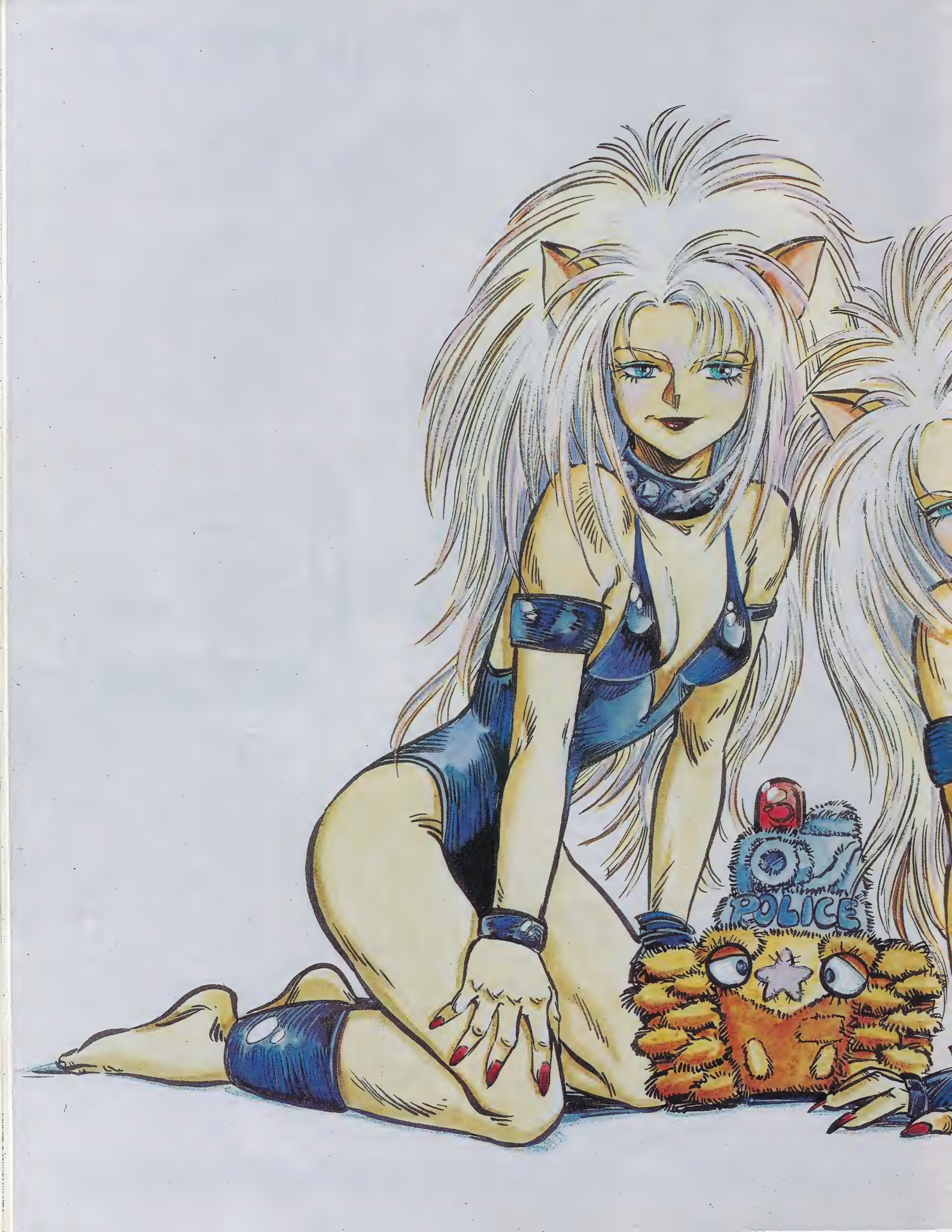
"Love your tank . . . ?"

Annapuna abruptly smashes the ambulance into Britten's tank. Furious, Britten leaps out of the tank with violent intent.

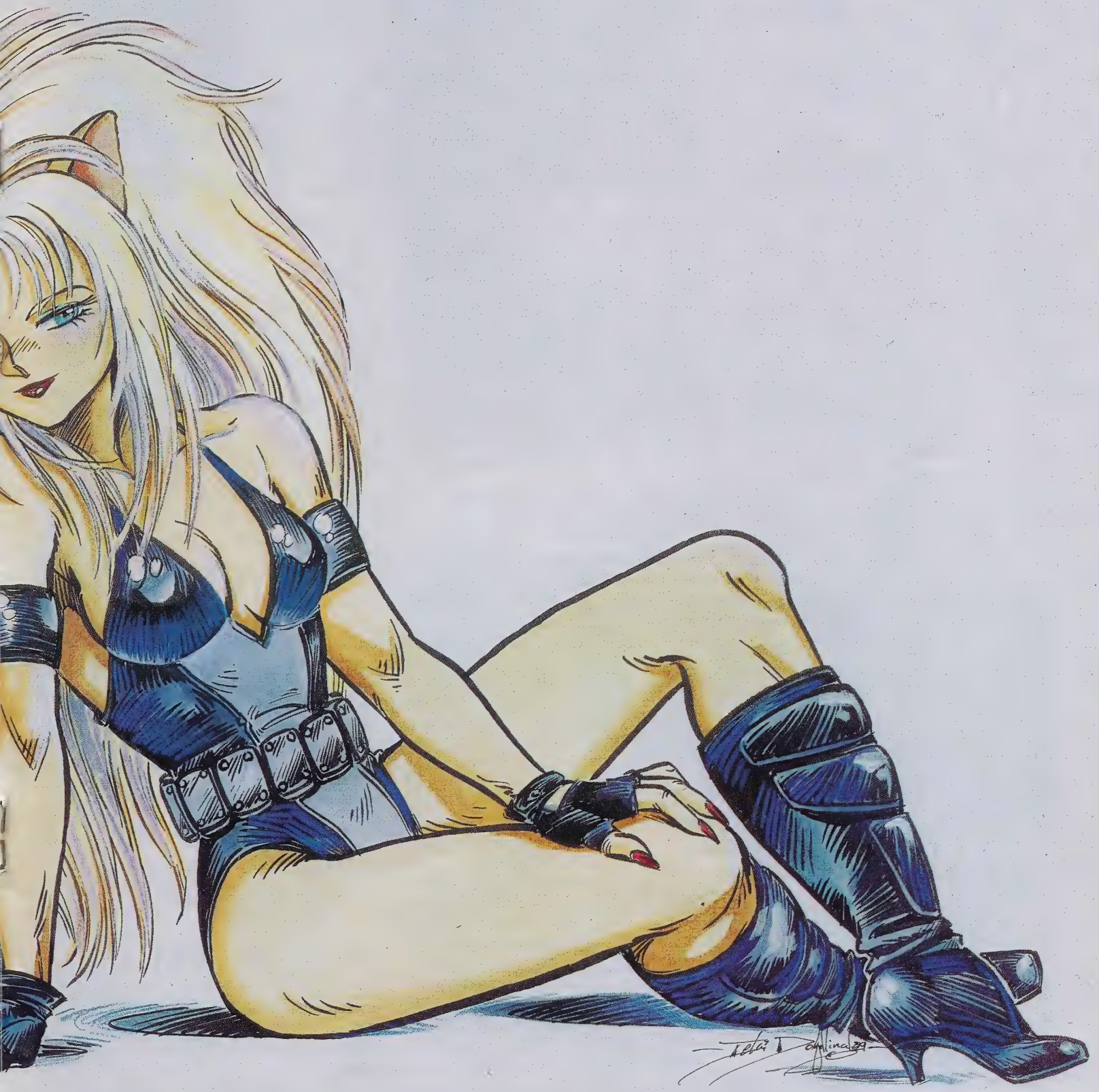
He narrowly avoids a bazooka blast in the face. Although Leona protests that she's never driven anything like this before, Al exhorts her to try and overtake the ambulance. Britten runs after them on foot, yelling at them to wait for him.

Al directs Leona to initiate turbo mode. The tank launches into action, careening madly down the street, coming to a forcible rest at the base of a tall building. Britten moans as the building collapses atop his beloved tank.

Leona heroically manages to extricate the mortally damaged tank and position it for one phenomenal last shot, striking near the fleeing Buaku gang and shattering the stolen capsules. The Captain's sweetheart goes up in a ball of flame.


POLICE

DOMiNiON



The Blame Always Flows Downhill

The Mayor yells at the Chief. "Look at this mountain of invoices! On top of that, you let the Buaku gang get away! You call yourselves the "just" Tank Police?"

The Chief screams at the Captain. ". . . look at this mountain of invoices . . . !"

The Captain lambastes Al and Leona. " . . . and you call yourselves the "just" Tank Police? But, I don't care about small matters like that. What I'm *really* mad about is that you totalled my tank!"

Leona tries to defend herself, saying that the tank was unwieldy and difficult to control. Britten is stricken. "Since prehistoric times, for men, bigger is better! The Tank Police is no place for a girl! You should go to the youth welfare division!" Leona trembles at the verge of tears. Britten challenges her, saying, *"I'm* the one who wants to cry!"

"Then go cry!" Leona snarls, stalking out of the room. Al physically restrains Britten from following her as he screams, "You'd better have a gun! Either I'm going to die, or that girl is going to die!" An excited Tank Police member thrusts a lead pipe into the air and shouts joyously, "Yeah! Let's stop the Captain!" as other men wave their arms enthusiastically.

At the hospital, Britten and Megane investigate. The Captain notices some broken capsules and tastes the contents from his fingertip. He comments on the salty taste, and sputters in horror as the doctor calmly tells him it's only urine.

"But urine from perfectly healthy people," he adds. There are people who are unaffected by the poisonous bacteriological cloud and remain perfectly healthy, yet lack any level of immunity to the bacteria. The doctor explains that over the years everyone has developed a minimal level of resistance to the bacteria, but not enough to be totally protected. As the quality of health has gradually declined, the very definition of "health" has changed. Although the people feel fine, the doctors know otherwise. The purpose of this special hospital is to study these healthy people.

Britten scoffs at time wasted on healthy people and leaves with Megane.

At Tank Police headquarters, Leona is despondent and is comforted by Shimpu, who tries to cheer her up by saying that a special tank should be built just for her.

Upon their return to the station, Britten struggles to understand the doctor's words. Megane, who understands, attempts to explain. "He meant that everyone who lives in this cloud of bacteria isn't totally healthy."

"But I feel fine! No aches or pains! I can breathe, but that doctor would probably declare me terminally ill. A hospital treating healthy people is like a policeman robbing banks. I've been restraining myself! Hell, just once in my life, I'd like to rob a bank!"

Megane explains that the reason they are still functioning is because their bodies can tolerate small doses of bacteria, and that the doctor is searching for people without this immunity.

Britten stumbles on the litter of mechanical parts on the floor. "What's this? The remains of my tank?" Leona, Al and Shimpu have assembled a huge collection of parts from Britten's tank to build Leona's new mini-tank, to be named "Bonaparte."

"Oh, how nice," gushes the Captain sarcastically. "You're using parts from my tank which you so conveniently destroyed! While we've been trying to unravel the mystery of the urine, you come in and start happily building your model toy tank! What a great crew!"

"It's not a model toy," Leona insists. "It moves!"

"Oooh, it moves!" Britten mimics. He sends Megane back to the hospital for further investigation and informs Leona that after she finishes her model toy, she'll be transferred to the youth welfare division. Leona is devastated.

Outside, a helicopter cruises overhead. The bacteriological cloud has reached a critical level of toxicity, and civilians are advised to stay indoors for their own safety.

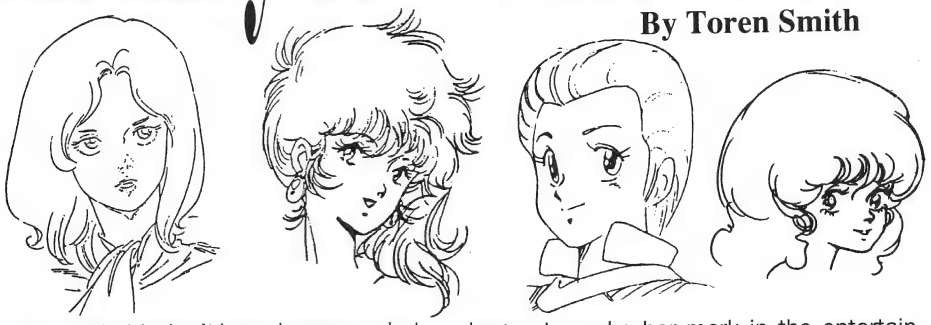
"The state will not be held responsible for any deaths due to atmospheric poisoning." ■

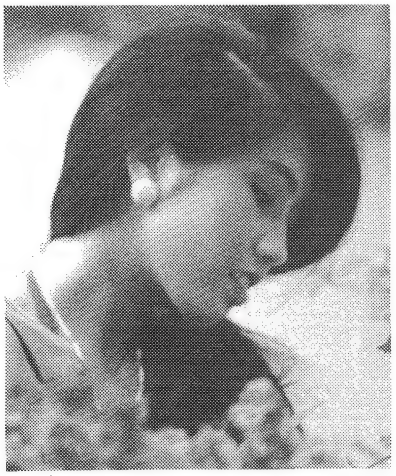
END Act I

An Interview with Maria Kawamura

The Lady behind the Voice

By Toren Smith





You probably don't know her name, but you're probably one of her fans. Do you like *Aura Battler Dunbine*? She's Chum Huau. *Zeta Gundam*? Belotica Irma. *Gall Force*? Eluza. *Megazone 23*? Yui. *Char's Counter-attack*? Quess. The list goes on. I first met her at the 1987 Atom Awards in Tokyo, and was totally captivated by her charisma and obvious intelligence. I've met her several times since then, and my opinion of her has only gotten higher. Maria Kawamura is a beautiful, multi-talented lady who has barely begun to make her mark in the entertainment industry. She throws herself into every project with a single-minded intensity and dedication that has made her the darling of producers, directors, and editors everywhere she's worked. She writes regularly for *Newtype*, has a novel coming out (an adaptation of Mamoru Nagano's comic, *Fool for the City*), several singles and an album (*Green and Gold*) under her belt, as well as an ever-expanding list of acting credits. Her talent and propensity for hard work has made her one of the most sought-after voice actresses in the business — Tomino has written parts in *Gundam* specifically for her, and GAINAX demanded her for one of the key roles (the red-headed bombshell, Jung Freud) in their new video, *Gunbuster*.

I spoke with her in Ikebukuro, Tokyo, and found out about a little of what makes this 26-year-old dynamo (but a very *gentle* dynamo) tick.

THE INTERVIEW

TOREN: So, how did you get your start in voice acting?

MARIA: Well, I was attending an acting school — a regular acting school — and they held auditions for *Dunbine*. Tomino wanted people who were primarily "good actors," so it was his idea to avoid professional voice actors and use regular actors with no voice acting experience. So I tried out, and was chosen for Chum Huau.

TOREN: Did you ever attend a voice acting school?

MARIA: No, I never did. Most voice actors in Japan do, however. After *Dunbine*, I auditioned for *L-Gaim* and just went straight into that. I played both Lilis Fau and Gaw Haw Reccy, which got pretty interesting later in the series when the two have a fight on-screen...!

TOREN: What's the life of a voice actress like? All work and no play, or what?

MARIA: I'm not sure I can tell the difference anymore! Anyway, I'm really busy these days because I'm right in the middle of recording a new album. Usually, though, I'm in the studio just three or four days a week. It's not all acting work — I also do narration for commercials and industrial films, and sometimes work as a DJ. During holiday periods like Golden Week (beginning of May), I make a lot of personal appearances, sometimes as a guest at a convention, sometimes as a singer.

TOREN: When you're in the studio, as a voice actress, what is a typical day like?

MARIA: Every day is different, of course, but for a TV program I'm often in the studio from 10:00 a.m. until the middle of the night. OAV work might take a couple such days, and that's generally the hardest work I do. The only time we leave the studio is to eat, and not even then, sometimes!

TOREN: Isn't that really hard on your voice?

MARIA: Well, yes, especially considering that a movie might involve four straight days of late-night recording, and since we *are* dealing with the human voice, if too much time is left between recordings, the voice changes. In fact, with movies, we generally spend awhile at the start of each day matching our voice to the previous takes. So, generally, it's better to just plow straight-on through whenever possible. Also, of course, when we're doing TV shows there isn't exactly a whole lot of time to mess around in. If we don't wrap it up in one day, there won't be a show next week. Concerns about our voices take a back seat, I'm afraid. Anyway, I'm used to it now.

TOREN: In general, I've found the Japanese system to be pretty hard on creators of every kind. A lot of talent gets strip-mined and abandoned in a year or three.

MARIA: It's true...I've seen it happen to some good people. Pop groups and especially idol singers get hit by the system really hard. It's unreasonable to expect someone to crank out four or five albums a year, isn't it?

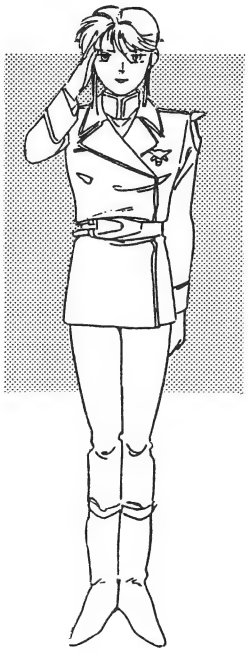
TOREN: Anyway, what happens during a typical recording session?

MARIA: You ought to know, being a professional voice actor yourself! (Laughter.)

TOREN: Sure, sure, five lines as "Operator One" in *Gunbuster*! I must have been in

the studio, oh, all of five minutes, including extra takes! Come on...inquiring minds want to know.

MARIA: Oh, all right. First of all, all the voice actors come in, and whoever is going to be directing us that day goes over the script with us, making any dialogue changes. We then watch the show straight through once, which gives us an idea of how much time we have to say things. If there are any places where there clearly is not enough time to say our lines, the dialogue is rewritten. Next we do a dry run, giving us the chance to practice our lines and the engineers a chance to set levels and do some test mixing. We then do a final dress rehearsal, with all the timing and recording just as a real take. If any problems crop up, we work them out, then plunge right into the real thing.



TOREN: Do you usually work with finished, edited animation, or with bits and pieces?

MARIA: In most cases, with TV anime, we use a fully edited program. However, the real world being what it is, sometimes the work isn't finished. Then we're faced with the dreaded "white screen"....

TOREN: The "white screen"?

MARIA: All we see on the screen is white, with a colored line representing the length of time our character has to talk. They just draw the lines down the film in the studio, with colored felt pens. So we watch the line and time things that way. With movies, we often record out of sequence for logistics reasons — there's such a large cast that it's difficult to get everyone together at one time.

TOREN: Do you ever work with pencil tests, in order to match mouth movements more closely?

MARIA: Well, there are times when we have just the basic picture, and the mouth movements are added afterward to match our voices, but that only happens with movies and productions with very large budgets and lots of lead time. It's far more common for there not to be any pictures at all, just those color bars, for the production people to match things in the editing. There is an exception to this, though, and that's when there are child actors involved. For instance, that system was used in *Hotaru no Haka* (Grave of the Fireflies), because one of the main characters was played by a four-year-old girl. They're also using it in *Akira*, but that's because the director is placing great emphasis on the quality of the acting, and the mouth movements are being added later to give the actors more freedom.

TOREN: Also because the director has an embarrassing amount of money to play with.

MARIA: That, too. (Laughs.)

TOREN: So, after the final take, what next?

MARIA: We go through and fix any errors or mix-ups, then all the actors gather and do street scenes, party scenes, et cetera. Then we get to leave, but the poor production staff are stuck there to do the mix-down and editing, often until dawn or later. I've come in again on the following day, and found they haven't gone home yet. They usually look *terrible*. (Laughs.)

TOREN: Other than voice acting, what other things do you do? I don't suppose you pose for lingerie ads or anything, do you?

MARIA: What?! Of course not!

TOREN: Ah, just my luck.

MARIA: You poor boy. (Laughs.) I write articles and essays for *Newtype* and other magazines and I'm working on my first novel.

TOREN: A novel? Really?

MARIA: Well, actually it's a novelization of Mamoru Nagano's comic, *Fool for the City*.

TOREN: Any acting? TV shows, that sort of thing?

MARIA: Now and again. I was recently in a video-only production, which will be released shortly.

TOREN: What sort of animation do you like?

MARIA: *Nausicaa*, of course, and I'm very fond of Disney films, especially *Sleeping Beauty*. I've also seen some superb Soviet animation. Raymond Briggs's *The Snowman* was wonderful, and I loved *Tonari no Totoro* (My Neighbor Totoro).

TOREN: Will you be playing a part in the upcoming *Five Star Stories* film?

MARIA: I'm not sure...it hasn't been cast yet. In fact, production has hardly begun on it, so....

TOREN: How is casting done?

MARIA: The production company notifies the talent agency that auditions will be held. After the auditions, the production company calls up the agency and lets them know if you made it. My agency is the "Arts Vision Agency." They handle about 50 people, so they're pretty small. Some have up to 300 people.

TOREN: There are far fewer voice actors in the U.S., for a number of reasons. Part of it is that voice actors there are expected to have a very large number of different voices they can do, so actually very few actors are needed.

MARIA: We all have a number of voices we do, but the recent trend is toward natural voices, and letting the voice actor match the character in personality. This has led to a natural lowering of age in the field, with lots more young girls and children getting into it. In the past, it was different. Still, *Manga Nihon Mukashi Banashi* (Cartoon Tales of Old Japan) is done by just two people, even now.

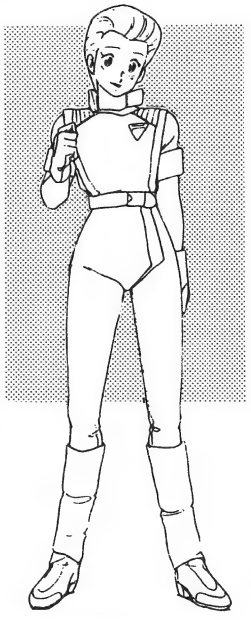
TOREN: So what characters do *you* match?

MARIA: Well...looking at the characters I've played, most of them seem to be strong-willed, rather prideful young women. Also, many of them have had paranormal powers, and I've been asked to play a lot of parts that aren't human. Right now I'm playing two characters, one a very Shakespearean princess, the other a rather nasty and vindictive aristocratic girl. Actually, I guess I've played a pretty wide variety of parts. Maybe there is no "real me." (Laughs.)

TOREN: I read an interview with Hirano Fumi (Lum in *Urusei Yatsura*), and she was saying that in order to *play* Lum, she felt she had to *be* like Lum, even to the extent of acting like her outside the studio, which is actually a pretty unnerving thought. Do you ever get drawn into a character in that way, even for a day or two while recording?

MARIA: (Laughs.) Oh, yes, often to the great inconvenience of my friends! My gestures, my voice, even my choice of words changes radically.

TOREN: Hmmm...let me know when you're playing the nasty, vindictive princess, will you, and I'll stay clear.



MARIA: (Laughs.) You'd *better*!

TOREN: Getting back on the track here, what about the Japanese union? In fact, *is* there one?

MARIA: Yes, there is, but it's pretty weak. Producers are always looking for new talent, so we just have to compete with each other. In

a sense it's like American musicals, with the audition system, so you end up with established pros and beginners working side by side. Animation stories have become more complex and realistic in recent years, and the number of comic or caricatured roles have dropped. So, in a sense, the approach of the production side has changed, and anime is being treated more like a regular live-action drama.

TOREN: I know that for *Oneamis no Tsubasa* (Wings of Oneamis) they used two regular TV actors for the lead roles, and also for *Kamui no Ken* (Dagger of Kamui). The union doesn't mind that sort of thing happening?

MARIA: The union *will* intervene if we're treated very unfairly, but if the goal of the production side is obviously to create a very good movie, then the union will keep quiet. The feeling is that the first priority goes to creating a good movie. If you look at *Oneamis*, Leo Morimoto was such a perfect match for the part of Shirotsugh, it would have been almost shameful had the union filed a complaint. Conversely, we voice actors can then appear in a live-action film without any hassles from the actor's union.

TOREN: Are there any voice actors whose work you're particularly fond of?

MARIA: Hmmm...that's a hard question...it's just too difficult to choose. There are just so many really good people!

TOREN: I wanted to ask you about your singing career. I know you've worked with Nagano on his last album (*Supernova*), singing several songs on it. What's up these days?

MARIA: Well, I'm almost embarrassed to talk about it....

TOREN: Don't be! Nagano played me some rough mixes from your new album, and they're just excellent. I did notice that you sing a wide variety of styles, though. What's your favorite?

MARIA: I *love* progressive rock.

TOREN: Great! So do I! "Burning Blue" off your album *Green and Gold* was excellent. It reminded me of the better Mike Oldfield vocal cuts, with a touch of Renaissance.

MARIA: Which groups do you like?

TOREN: Rush, Genesis, a very obscure group named Twelfth Night...don't get me talking about progressive rock or you'll be here for hours.

MARIA: We have to trade some tapes.

TOREN: Absolutely. Well, you said you have to be in the studio by eight o'clock, so....

MARIA: Well, it's been fun. You asked very interesting questions, much better than the usual — thank you!

TOREN: And thank *you* for giving us your time.

Special thanks to David Lewis, Mamoru Nagano, and Ryoetsu Sato of TOYS PRESS for help with this interview.

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JULY 16, 1988:
TOKYO IS DESTROYED.

THIRTY-ONE YEARS AFTER WORLD WAR III,
THE CITY HAS BEEN REBUILT, THE POLITICAL SITUATION
IS RESTLESS. . .

AKIRA

AKIRA AWAITS RESURRECTION

by Dan Akurt and Toshifumi Yoshida

Akira is one of the highest-grossing and most expensive animated films to date, featuring some of the best and most realistic animation ever to hit the silver screen. The film required eight production companies to fund the enormous budget, over 30 companies to do the actual animation, and contains an unprecedented 150,000 drawings, enough for two or even three standard animated films. The film contains over 2,000 scene cuts, each requiring a different hand-painted background, and 50 of the 327 colors used were custom-blended for the film.

In order to create the most realistic animation and the most natural-sounding dialogue possible, recording of the soundtrack broke with Japanese animation tradition—the soundtrack was pre-recorded, the animation of the characters' mouth movements the last step in the animating process.

The script was created with specific voice actors in mind (who ranged in experience from television to Shakespearian actors), and a wide margin was left for improvisation in order to re-create the spontaneous feel of live-action dialogue.

The musical soundtrack was written and recorded by over 200 musicians, and the chanting in the soundtrack's main theme reflects a strong African tribal influence.

While the movie itself is a first in both production techniques and large-scale appeal to an older, more adult audience, the comic series it is based on continues to run in *Weekly Young Magazine*, a Japanese comic periodical.

Katsuhiro Otomo, creator of *Akira*, wrote and directed the film and adapted the story so that the ending of his still-running manga would remain a surprise.

Akira is not Otomo's only work; he won the Science Fiction Comic Award in 1983 with his series "*Domu*." Otomo's other stories include *Fire Ball*, *The Feeling of War*, and *Sayonara Nippon*. He also created the character designs for the 1983 animated feature *Harmageddon*, as well as directing the "Road Construction" segment in the *Tales of the Labyrinth* OAV.

Non-Japanese speakers have a reason to rejoice: the comic form of *Akira* is currently being released in English by the Epic Comics, a division of Marvel Comics. TMS (Tokyo Movie Shinsha), one of the eight production companies that form the Akira Production Committee, has announced plans to release *Akira* to American audiences sometime in the near future.

Tetsuo

Tetsuo's feelings of inferiority stem from his lifelong relationship with Kaneda, whom he sees as both protector and later, antagonist. Tetsuo's wanton use of his newly discovered power is what sparks Akira's rebirth, and the destruction that follows.

Kaneda

The leader of his bike gang, Kaneda is an arrogant and cocksure child of the times. He and Tetsuo grew up together in an orphanage and Tetsuo both admires and resents him. Kaneda takes part in the resistance movement because of his attraction to Kei, a young resistance worker, and becomes instrumental in both Tetsuo and Akira's fate.

Modern Society

Kaneda, street punk, sits idling in his favorite seedy bar when Yamagata comes bursting in with news of their rival gang, the Clowns. Coming out of the stairwell into the alley, they see Tetsuo fooling with Kaneda's bike.

"You want it?" Kaneda asks sardonically as Tetsuo and Yamagata mount their bikes. "If you like it so much, pull a job, steal your own." They race off into Neo-Tokyo to deal some serious damage to the Clowns, the odd pedestrian and local windows. Tetsuo is accidentally thrown from his bike and climbs resentfully back on while Kaneda takes out the Clown's grinning leader. When the police arrive, both gangs disappear into the night.

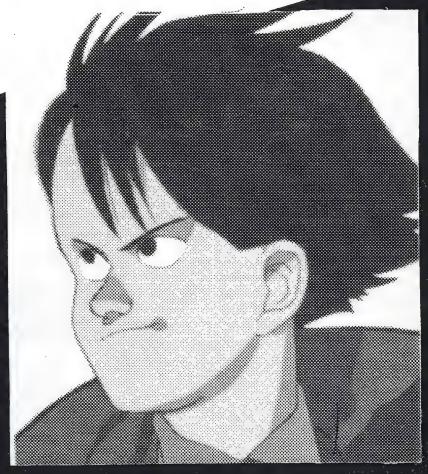
Elsewhere in the night a bleeding rioter drags a strangely decrepit small boy behind him. The two are cornered by the army as a crowd gathers to watch. A girl pushes her way through the pressing crowd to a tall, mustached man—Ryu. The rioter is gunned down, and the boy, whom the man had protected with his body, goes into a screaming frenzy. Mass chaos ensues as nearby buildings crumble and as Ryu calls to the girl, forces are sent to control the riots started by the explosions.

Kaneda, Tetsuo and gang chase the Clowns into a restricted area of town, the old city. Intent upon smashing a Clown, Tetsuo is going too fast to avoid the small figure in the middle of the road. Just before the explosion, the number 26 shows blue on the boy's upflung palm.

The smoke clears, Tetsuo lies bleeding on the pavement, and Kaneda comes to the rescue. Just as he arrives lights burst onto the scene and choppers fill the air. A wizened boy surrounded by controls in a hovering chair confronts No. 26 and reminds him that their kind cannot survive on the outside. "I came to bring you back," he says. "Let's go."

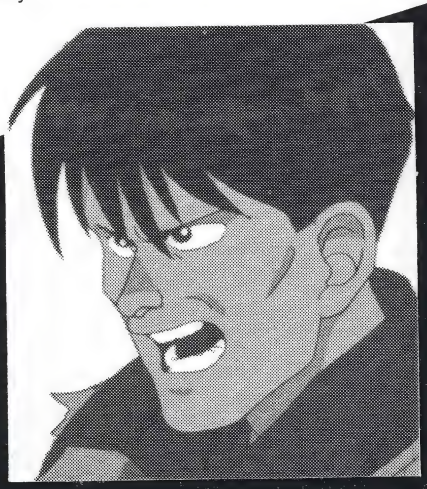
Kaneda and his gang are restrained while No. 26 and the unconscious Tetsuo are removed from the scene by the army. The gang's indignant questions are ignored and they are transported with a mass of apprehended rioters to police headquarters for questioning.

"Anything wrong, officer?" Kaneda smiles sappily. He catches sight of a face in the resistance mug book and leans forward with a lecherous exclamation. Kaneda is able to convince the officer that he and his gang are innocent of terrorism with a story about racing to visit his sick mother, and is ushered into a holding bay with the rest of his gang. After a scare with a grenade-holding fanatic, Kaneda finagles the release of his gang as well as that of a pretty girl in the crowd, the one in the mug book—Kei. On their way out of the station, the gang wonders about Tetsuo while an industrious Kaneda flirts with a disinterested Kei. After spotting a fellow terrorist in the crowd, she thanks Kaneda and makes a hasty retreat. As Kaneda watches her leave, the "dud" grenade blows the roof off the police holding bay.



Kai

One of the members of Kaneda's gang and also his left-hand man.

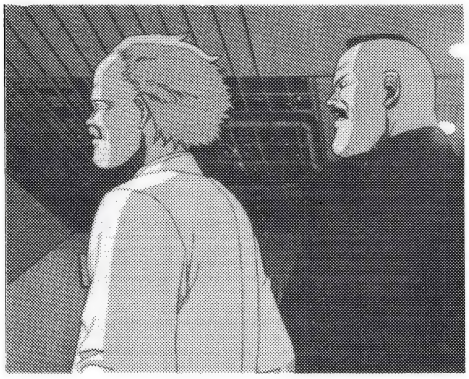


Yamagata

A man of action who thinks with his fists; second in command in Kaneda's gang.

Political Games

In his office, the Colonel and an influential Council member discuss their current strategies for the next Supreme Council meeting. The Council member agrees to bring up the subject of a possible leak on the Council, but warns that the Colonel's record is itself under inspection and advises that he put his affairs in order. The meeting is interrupted by a call from the Doctor, who is very excited about the unusual results from the injured Tetsuo's examination. On the special pattern emulator, Tetsuo's pattern has an unusual morphology and rate of growth—"It may even be the key to discovering the secret of Akira's power," the Doctor says excited-



ly. Upon his arrival at the lab, the Colonel gives the Doctor permission to continue the experiments, while the Doctor tries to evade the question of whether Tetsuo, unlike Akira, can be controlled.

"Maybe this power is not ours to play with," the Colonel says reflectively.

"You mean, the power of God?"

"We have to play with it, touch upon it, control it!" The Colonel turns to the the Doctor. "If it gets out of control, destroy it."

Stage Blue

Vocational Training School over for the day, Kaneda and gang walk through the school courtyard with their fists thrust into their pockets. A group of young girls, the gang's molls, rushes up to meet them. Tetsuo's girl, Kaori, meekly asks where Tetsuo is and is told that nobody knows.

Tetsuo has in fact escaped from the hospital ward and later meets with Kaori to discuss the two of them running away together. Kaori wants to know where they'd go.

"I don't know," he says. "Anywhere." This idea in mind, the next day Tetsuo and Kaori go to the Vocational Training School and take Kaneda's bike in full view of Kaneda and his gang. When the bike stalls, Tetsuo and Kaori are attacked by the Clowns. Kaneda, Yamagata, and Kai, interrupting the violent intentions of the Clowns, arrive in force just in time.

Kaneda says 'enough' to Tetsuo's frenzied retribution on the Clown who tormented Kaori, at which Tetsuo bursts into rage. "Don't order me around! You're always telling me what to do!" Before Kaneda can respond, Tetsuo goes into a hallucinating seizure. Gasping and reeling, precognitive flashes speed through his mind.

In the laboratory, the Doctor stares at the pattern Tetsuo is creating on the emulator. "He's gone into stage blue—quickly, go pick him up!"

When the government forces arrive, a puzzled and concerned Kaneda is once again restrained while Tetsuo is removed from the scene.

Plots, Plans, and Dreams

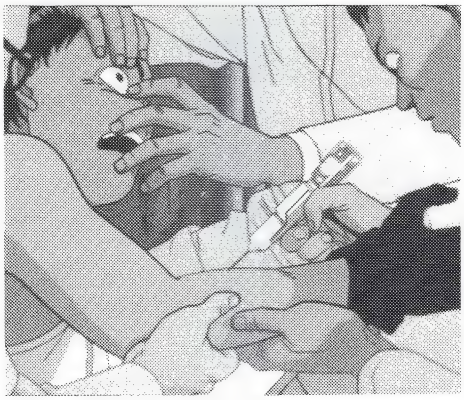
Later that evening, loitering in the mall with his gang and their molls, Kaneda catches sight of Kei running at the forefront of an explosion and sets off after her.

Kei eventually meets with Ryu, who directs her to the sewer system after reconfirming their rendezvous point. Kaneda finds Kei in the city's sewers exchanging shots with government agents.

In his hospital room, Tetsuo dreams of his childhood with Kaneda in the orphanage. In the dream his body starts to crumble, powdering like stone, and he calls frantically out to Kaneda, who only smiles.

Kiyoko (No. 25), the third and frailest of the numbered children, also has a dream, which she tells to the Colonel—a dream of Akira's rebirth amid citywide destruction. Despite the Colonel's urgent questions, Kiyoko falls back into sleep, murmuring, "You mustn't let that boy go . . . his strength . . . ."

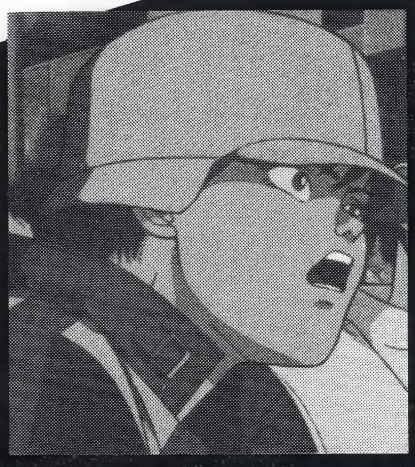
Disturbed, the Colonel and the Doctor go to the darkened recesses of Akira's tomb-like vault. The changed, greedy attitude of the city now that reconstruction



has finished bothers the Colonel, while the Doctor is preoccupied with the thought of eventually controlling Akira's power. Once in front of Akira's vault, his breath freezing in the air, the Colonel comments on the hurried job done to contain Akira, the filling of the hole "humanity should not have dug."

Kaneda and Kei, having killed the agents in the sewer tunnels, search for Ryu at the rendezvous point. When they finally find him and his associates, they lock Kaneda into a small room from which he manages to escape. Overhearing Ryu, Kei and their two associates talk. It is apparent that the resistance group has been instrumental in the recent rioting and political struggles. The group has received orders to sneak into the laboratory and gather detailed data on the new "experimental body." When Kaneda is discovered, he saves himself from immediate death by blurting out that the new experimental body is his friend.

The Colonel's suspicion of a leak on the Council proves correct—the leak is a council member named Nezu, who later meets with Ryu in the city. The two discuss the plans, which now include Kaneda, to retrieve Akira. On the streets below are demonstrator/religious groups who, speaking of the return of Akira, are scattered by the authorities.



Kei

Kei's dedication to her mission involves her with both Kaneda and Tetsuo. She is the possible link to the understanding and use of Akira's power. Kei and Ryu share a mentor/pupil relationship.

At the Supreme Council meeting the members discuss the current situation—the demonstrations and the terrorist activities, the massive overexpenditures. The Council not only declines the Colonel's request for further funds, but questions his administrative abilities. The Colonel, infuriated by the Council's inability to see the trouble that lies ahead, walks out on the meeting.

Nursery Games

In his room in the laboratory, he wakes in pain.

Tetsuo cannot sleep and watches in bewilderment as his toys begin to clamber about on his pillow . . . and then transform into giant, looming monsters. Only when Tetsuo cuts his feet on shards of broken glass does the hallucination fade, the monsters cowering at the sight of blood and screaming in children's voices. The small numbered children appear briefly before disappearing. Tetsuo uses his power to track the location of the children, mentally zooming down the halls. When Tetsuo's presence is detected by a doctor and two guards, he causes them to explode into a gruesome mass, dripping from the ceiling.

Below, several "repairmen" (Kaneda, Kei, and Ryu) make their way through the building's sewage tunnels. They think they are safe, at least until several anti-grav platforms intercept them. Their party is split up by the waves and the tunnels. Kaneda manages to intercept a platform and drag Kei along with him, although they have no idea where to go.

Tetsuo heads for the nursery where the three numbered children are kept, leaving bodies in his wake. Once inside the threshold, Takashi (No. 26) and Masaru (No. 27) try to fight him off, but Tetsuo is seemingly indestructible.

As Kaneda and Kei blast along the tunnels, Kiyoko (No. 25) reaches out telepathically to Kei, giving her directions to the nursery until she is interrupted by Tetsuo's presence. The two boys try to protect her, but not even the arrival of the Colonel and the Doctor can stop Tetsuo's rampage. Seeing that Tetsuo is even now suffering from severe headaches, the Doctor tells him that his powers aren't yet complete and that he still needs treatment. Tetsuo lashes out in anguish at the the Doctor and the Colonel.

"What did you do to my head?!"

The two boys tell Tetsuo telepathically that he must not continue to abuse his fledgling power, or he will lose control of it. Terrified by Tetsuo's bullying, Kiyoko lets the name "Akira" slip into her thoughts.

"Akira!" Tetsuo exclaims. "He keeps coming into my head—where is he?" When there is no answer, Tetsuo once again strikes out around him. Kaneda and Kei burst in on the scene, Kaneda announcing that he is here to rescue Tetsuo.

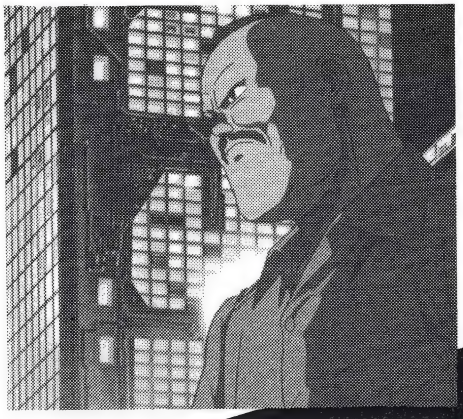
Tetsuo casually destroys several guards and says to Kaneda that he doesn't need to be "rescued" anymore. "From now on," he says boldly, "I'll be the one rescuing you!"

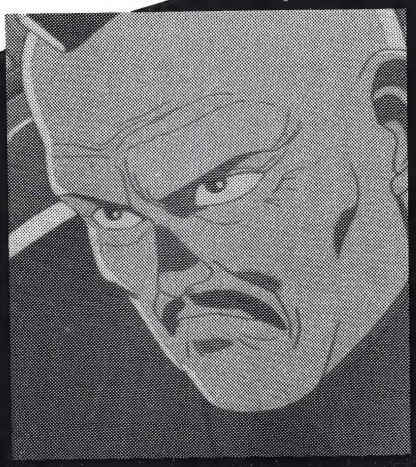
"Who the hell do you think you're talking to?" an astonished Kaneda snarls. Tetsuo blasts him off his feet and then, laughing, forces the location of Akira from Kiyoko's mind and teleports away.

Power Plays

Reflecting on the nature of the fiasco, the Colonel leaves the building only to be told by an appointee of the Council that he has been deposed and is to surrender. Snarling that this is not the time for a transfer of power, the Colonel orders his men to shoot the appointee and declares an emergency military state—effectively, a military coup.

The catalyst for the current state of emergency, Tetsuo, has returned to his gang's seedy hangout to get some drugs. When Yamagata and Kai arrive later, they find the bar a wrecked shambles, the bartender dead, and a mentally unstable Tet-





The Colonel

The Colonel's skepticism and force of will is the only thing resembling normalcy in this new world. He is the symbol of oppressive power in the pursuit of knowledge and a better society.

Ryu

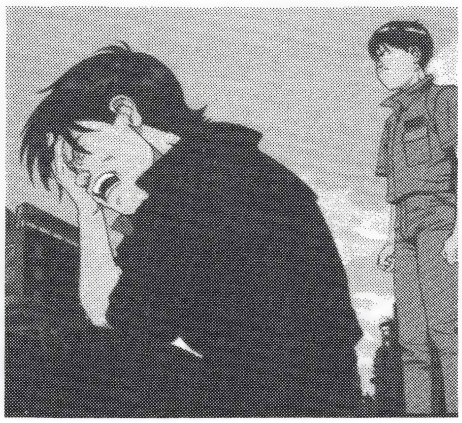
The leader of the resistance movement, Ryu is willing to die for what he believes in. His connections with the Council and Councilman Nezu allow him to become involved in the political scene and work for changes dictated by the resistance leaders. Kaneda later joins Ryu's resistance cell because of his interest in Kei.

Nezu

A behind-the-scenes supporter of the resistance movement, Nezu in reality works only for himself. His position on the Council allows him to gain access to both sides of the political struggle and to profit from what he knows, although it ultimately leads to tragedy for Neo-Tokyo.

suo laughing to himself in a corner. Tetsuo informs them that Kaneda is probably dead, and asks slyly about Kaneda's bike. When Yamagata's questions and attitude become annoying, Tetsuo kills him.

Kaneda, incarcerated with Kei in the same cell, asks her to explain what the big deal is about this "Akira." Kei explains to Kaneda that a man with the power of Akira is about the same as an amoeba with the power of a man. Once again, it is Kiyoko speaking through Kei, and Kiyoko who mentally unlocks the door to their cell. Outside, Kaneda and Kei run into Kai, who tells them of Tetsuo's actions in the bar and that Yamagata is dead. In traditional biker fashion they destroy Yamagata's bike in memoriam. Kei screams and Kaneda comes running to see her walking on the sewer water, following the beckoning No. 26. Kaneda tries to follow, but they disappear; Kiyoko's bodiless voice explains to him that the power of Akira resides in everyone. Ready or not, when someone gets the power, they must decide what to do with it. Tetsuo has made his choice and the three numbered children need Kei to help them control him. Kaneda demands that they bring Kei back, and to leave Tetsuo to him since he can take care of the situation, but there is no answer.



The political situation is still roiling, and the Colonel has sent men to round up and contain all of the Council members. The "leak" on the Council, Nezu, is both frantically packing a suitcase and swallowing pills for his heart in his Council-appointed quarters. He is about to escape when Ryu, dazed and bloody, comes in the door. Nezu, totally panicked, accuses him of being a traitor and a spy, shooting him and leaving him to die. Outside, the army is trying to contain or kill Tetsuo while an eager populace watches and the large cult of Akira urges the people to follow Tetsuo and de-

struction. In an alleyway, Nezu has a heart attack and crumples. Behind him, Ryu staggers to the street and dying, watches the revolution he had started continue without him.

Akira

Tetsuo reaches the entrance to Akira's vault beneath the half-completed Olympic stadium while in his lab the Doctor studies the special pattern emulator in amazement.

Back in the schoolyard, Kaneda mounts his bike. "What are you doing?" Kai cries.

"Well, if he wants this bike so bad, guess I'd better give it to him," Kaneda says and takes off. In the vault, Tetsuo is confronted by Kei, who forbids him to raise Akira. It is futile, however—Kaneda, the Colonel, and Tetsuo's followers watch Akira's vault burst from the ground. Kei attempts once more to stop Tetsuo, but he deflects her with ease, blasting her hundreds of yards away. Mentally he strips away the layers of metal surrounding Akira only to find—

Body parts in bottles. The Colonel, on intercom, speaks to him and to everyone. "That's Akira, Tetsuo. The one you've been wanting to meet. Your savior."

The Colonel explains that past scientists were unable to figure out the secret of the power, so they put Akira's remaining bodily systems into cryogenic freezing for future generations. Pausing, the Colonel tells one of his men that they are going to use the S.O.L. (Satellite in Orbit Laser) on Tetsuo. The Colonel gets on the mike and concludes, "Akira is already dead! Are you satisfied?" In response,

Tetsuo throws his power at the CRC (Control Room Car). The Colonel shouts an order to prepare the S.O.L.

The crowd, learning that their savior Akira is dead, is departing the scene when Kaneda and Kai arrive. As Kaneda, armed with a dead soldier's laser rifle, confronts Tetsuo and baits him into a confrontation, Kei crawls out of the hole she had been flung into in her earlier battle with Tetsuo. A laughing Tetsuo is about to disintegrate Kaneda when the S.O.L. beam hits Tetsuo dead on and incinerates his previously wounded arm.

Kaneda tries to take advantage of Tetsuo's pain, attempting to brain him with a rock, but when the S.O.L. beam comes on again Tetsuo uses his power to travel to the source of the beam—space—and destroys it.

In the CRC, the Doctor studies Tetsuo's simulated pattern in awe as Tetsuo, returning to the now-deserted stadium, creates a new arm out of wires and rubble. The Colonel, returning to the CRC, takes one look at the simulator and roars, "I told you to destroy him if he got out of hand!" and stomps out to deal with the situation personally.

Tetsuo

Kaori comes to the stadium to find Tetsuo cowering in pain and helps him to his "throne" by the altar of Akira's vials. Tetsuo is trying to maintain a stable condition but his mechanical arm is going wild; when the Colonel arrives and manages to shoot him, he loses control of his flesh and his arm turns into a bulging mass. The Colonel is engulfed and only the distraction of Kaneda's return allows Tetsuo to get a grip on himself.

The two once again try to kill each other, but as the small numbered children arrive and arrange themselves in front of the "altar," Tetsuo once again is unable to contain his power and his body swells into a gigantic, grotesque lump of malevolent thrashing flesh. An agonized Tetsuo is helpless as Kaneda and Kaori are engulfed

Kiyoko (No. 25)—Confined to her bed, she maintains a telepathic link with Kei and uses her as a tool against Tetsuo.

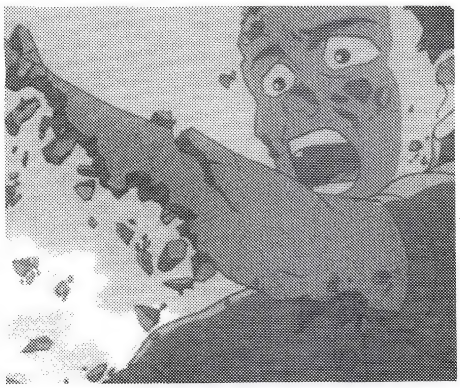
The Numbered Children

These "children" were part of a government experiment to breed artificial espers. They were subjected to a process of electrical alteration of the brain on a genetic level.

Although they appear to be small children, they are actually over 30 years old. A side effect of a heavy regimen of drugs since early in life has halted physical development but not aging, hence their wizened appearance. The children are dependent on drugs for their continued survival.

and Kaori finally crushed to death. The Colonel fires uselessly again and again at Tetsuo, but Masaru, Kiyoko and Takashi are oblivious in their attempts to raise Akira.

The bottles shatter from the Colonel's shots and Tetsuo draws back as Akira slowly reassembles himself. In the CRC, the simulator overloads with power. The Colonel finds himself transported out of the stadium as Kiyoko's ghostly voice tells him to get to safety. Akira's enormous power is engulfing the Olympic site and Tetsuo, sucked into it, desperately reaches out for a disgorged Kaneda, drawing them both into the glowing, growing sphere that is Akira. No. 26 throws himself in after Kaneda in an attempt to bring him out, and Masaru and Kiyoko follow in the hope that together they will be able to save Kaneda from Tetsuo and Akira's fate.



Inside Akira, Kaneda spins through Tetsuo's memories—the orphanage—their first meeting—Tetsuo's feelings of inferiority—"Is this what you see, Tetsuo?" he asks, stunned.

Kaneda is then plunged into Akira's thoughts—the experiments done on the three other children to make them like Akira—"This is Akira?" Kaneda asks.

"Yes, we called him to take Tetsuo away," the children answer. "He couldn't handle it . . . neither could we, nor Akira. It was too big for us. But soon, even we . . . . It's already begun . . . your friend . . . ."

"Mine? You mean Kei?" Kaneda is again drawn through Tetsuo's memories of their childhood together. Kei's voice calls him and he is pulled back out into the stadium.

Akira/Tetsuo's power spins outward and then implodes, spiraling out waves of force that suck the city into its vacuum and reduces the rest to rubble. In the CRC, the Doctor stares at the simmering surface of the emulator. "It's almost like—space being created! It's disappearing—what's happening?" The Doctor is crushed by the collapsing walls around him.

Water crashes through the city until finally the air is still and only the stadium's rim pokes out of the newly-formed bay. The tiny point of light that was Tetsuo drifts toward Kaneda, on his knees in the rubble. He catches the spark and as it finally dies out, Kaneda whispers, "Tetsuo . . ."

Kei and Kai slosh over to him, light bursting through the clouds into the city. The Colonel stares dumbfounded at the disaster about him as Kai, Kaneda and Kei, on the wreckage of their bikes, make their way back into the city.

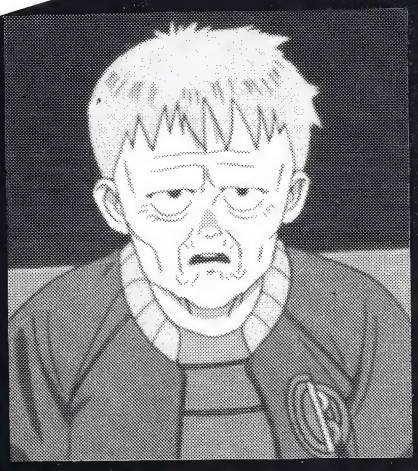
Far away, a new universe is forming. As matter and light rotate and spangle, forming stars, a voice whispers, softly.

"I am . . . Tetsuo . . . ."

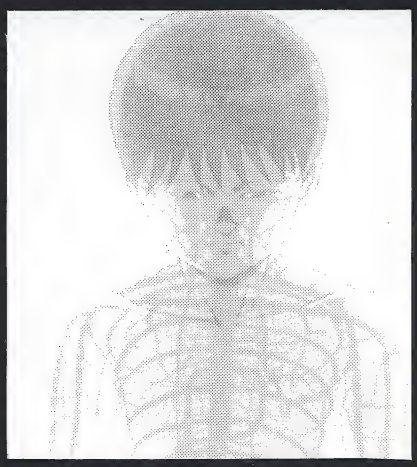
The Doctor

The Doctor is more interested in data than in the living things data is gathered from. His fascinated non-intervention allows the mad escalation of Tetsuo's uncontrollable power.

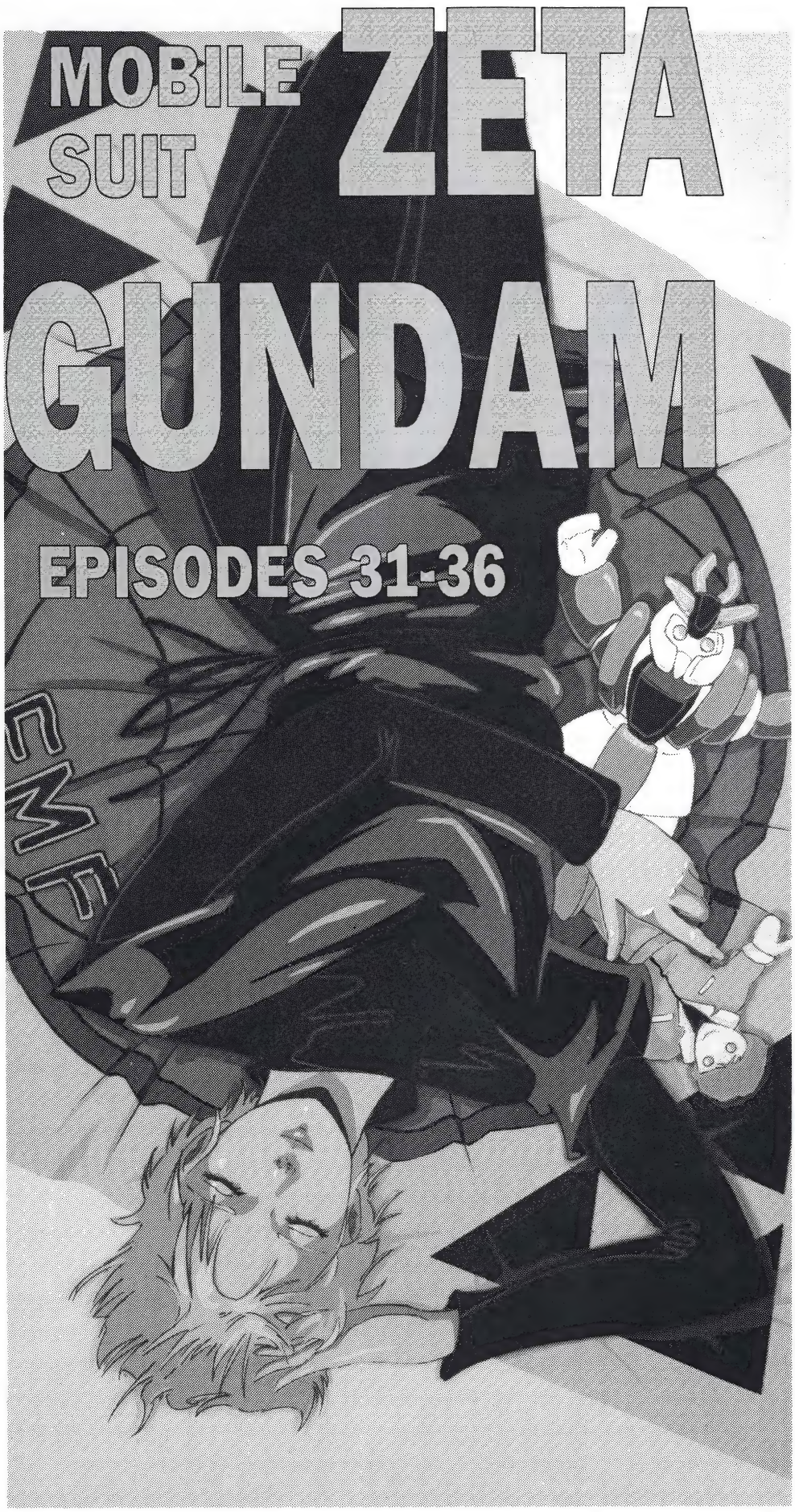
Masaru (No. 27)—Masaru depends on a floating chair for movement and seems the child most under the military's spell.



Takashi (No. 26)—The only mobile child, his removal from the nursery by resistance forces is the catalyst for Tetsuo's realization of his own powers.



Akira (No. 28)—Akira is quite different from the other numbered children and the government treats him that way. Akira was the cause of the destruction of Neo-Tokyo 31 years ago. Now, the cult that has built up around his legend awaits the rebirth of the person they think is their savior, Akira . . .



Written by James Teal

The Story Thus Far

U.C. 0087—As time passes, the battles between the AEUG and the Titans increase in intensity. The *Ahgama* and the *Radish* fall prey to subsequent attacks by the Titans.

During one skirmish, Yazan Gable pauses before the bridge of the *Alexandria*, making himself an easy target. When Emma Sheen in the Super Gundam fires at him, he casually dodges the beam that goes on to destroy the bridge the *Alexandria* and kill Jamaican Daningan. Yazan sheds few tears over his death.

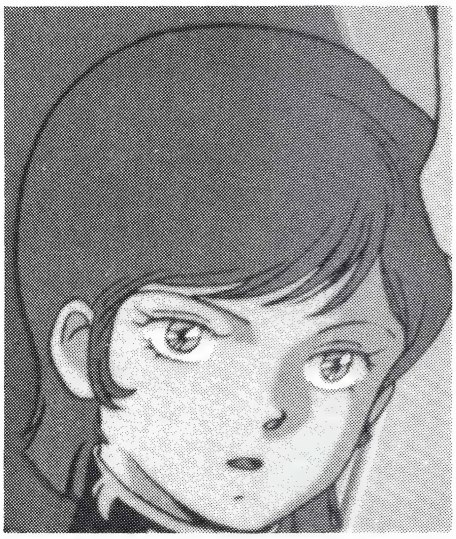
Viewing the *Ahgama* and *Radish* as a continual threat, the Titans constantly formulate elaborate schemes to cripple their enemy. In the midst of combat, Char returns to space via shuttle, the two children Shinta and Qumu with him. The three exit the shuttle in a lifeboat because the shuttle captain refuses to fly into a battle zone. The Zeta Gundam has been targeted for destruction as Sara Zabiarov and Maure Faroh prepare the Titans' megabazooka launcher. The shot misses everything on the battlefield and ironically, destroys the shuttle. Char, Shinta, and Qumu arrive at the *Ahgama* safely.

Reccoa is assigned to infiltrate the Titans' gas skimmer *Jupitoris* on an information retrieval mission. During the reconnaissance Reccoa meets the captain of the *Jupitoris*, Paptimus Scirocco. Scirocco suspects her ulterior motives, but mysteriously allows her to escape. After she returns to the *Ahgama*, thoughts of Scirocco taunt her.

When the Titans threaten to gas one of the Side Z colonies, the *Ahgama* arrives with the intent to stop them. Katsu destroys the gas canisters while Camille fights off the Titans mobile suits. After destroying the canisters, Katsu goes to aid Camille, who is now fighting a losing battle against Jerid and Maure. The space colony is saved, but the colonists' defeatist attitude and willingness to succumb to the Titans' demands leave Bright with the feeling that the war will become even more difficult.

The *Ahgama* is sent to meet with the forces being built at the asteroid of Axcis. The AEUG hopes to enlist the aid of these forces in the battle against the Titans. Suspecting this, the Titans plan to destroy the *Ahgama* once and for all. Yazan leads a large diversionary attack, forcing the *Ahgama* to retreat to the area where Jerid and Maure wait for their opportunity to ambush the ship. Catching the crew completely off guard, Jerid and Maure land devasting shots upon the *Ahgama*. Camille rushes back to defend the ship and engages Jerid in another grueling duel to the death. Just as Camille fires the deciding shot, Maure interposes the Gabthley between the beam and Jerid, sacrificing herself so that he may live. Jerid, witnessing her death, goes berserk but is eventually driven off with the rest of the Titans strike group. The *Ahgama* has survived, but must now return to Von Braun City for repairs.

NEW CHARACTERS



Mineva Lao Zabi

Mineva is the eight-year-old daughter of Dozuru and Zena Zabi. As the last known surviving Zabi, she is heir to the Jion throne. Her youth makes her little more than a figurehead, as she knows little of commanding a military force.

Dankle Cooper and Ramses Hassa

These two Titans pilots are Yazan Gable's wingmen. Being equally vicious and ruthless as Yazan, this trio is deadly. They train for combat as the Hambrabi team and use group tactics to increase their effectiveness almost exponentionally. The design of the Hambrabi allows them to exploit the full potential of psychological warfare.

Haman Kahn

Being Mineva's military advisor effectively renders Haman the leader of the Jion people and their military forces at Axcis. Haman is cold and calculating and a very powerful newtype; during key battles, she enters combat with the psychommu mobile suit, Qubeley. Her ties with Char and Scirocco are vague, and are rooted in the past.

EPISODES 31–36

31 "Half Moon Love"

The *Ahgama* arrives at Von Braun City for refueling and supplies. Shinta and Qumu want to visit Armstrong Park but Fa forbids it. The children storm off, saying that they'll go anyway.

Elsewhere on the moon's surface, three Hambrabis and the Messala land. Sara Zabiarov exits the Messala and departs for Von Braun City with a small time bomb. The Hambrabi team will wait for her to complete her part of the mission.

Back at the *Ahgama*, Fa cannot locate Shinta or Qumu. When she tells Camille the children are missing, he agrees to help her look for them. They leave the *Ahgama* and head into Von Braun City in hopes of finding them in Armstrong Park.

Sara wanders through the park, wondering where the *Ahgama* is docked, and spots Camille. Camille, sensing the presence of another newtype nearby, mistakes Sara's presence as Four Murasame's. Hoping that Four is still alive, Camille eludes Fa and follows Sara's newtype emanations. Sara dashes into a women's boutique and makes a pretense at trying on clothes in an effort to hide from Camille. After losing Sara's trail, Camille dismisses his thoughts as wishful thinking and continues the search for Shinta and Qumu. Relieved, Sara leaves the boutique, making her way to one of the city's maintenance rooms. Once there, she knocks out the guard and sets the bomb into a maintenance tube that will deliver the bomb closer to the *Ahgama*'s docking bay.

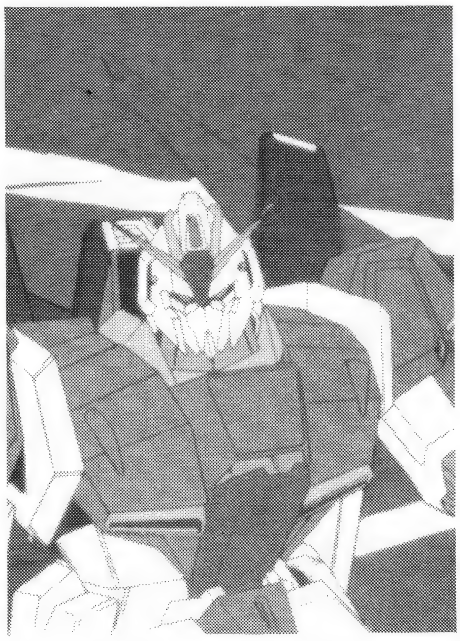
Sensing a newtype presence yet again, Camille resumes his search for the source of the emanations. He spots Sara exiting the maintenance room and chases her down. They discuss Sara's involvement with the Titans as Camille tries to convince her to quit being a soldier, since she seems to want nothing more than to become a normal girl. As if to prove a point, Camille goes to buy them ice cream, just like normal teenagers might do. Fa, who has been watching nearby, confronts Camille at the ice cream stand. Fa voices her suspicions about Sara.

"Isn't that girl the Titans pilot who was sent to warn us about the space colony headed for Granada?" Camille asks Fa to return to the *Ahgama* and notify Bright of their suspicions about Sara's presence in Von Braun City.

As she sits alone, Sara wonders to herself why she is waiting for Camille. Before she can make up her mind whether to stay or go, Camille returns with the cones. After a brief discussion in which Camille warns Sara never to confront him on the battlefield again, he prepares to return to the *Ahgama*. Sara has an apparent

change of heart and reluctantly informs Camille of the bomb on the *Ahgama*. Forcing Sara to accompany him to a communication center, Camille broadcasts an evacuation order. Fa returns to the *Ahgama* as Bright gives the launch command.

In the Von Braun City control room, Sara reveals the location of the bomb in the ventilation system to Camille but they are unable to reach it for disarming. After it explodes, destroying the launching bay, Sara makes an escape attempt but is captured by Camille, who renders her unconscious and transports her to the *Ahgama*. Aboard, Sara is pinioned wearing a normal suit while Camille tries to convince her not to return to Scirocco. The bomb detonates on schedule as Fa worries that Shinta and Qumu may have been caught in the blast.



The explosion serves as the signal for the Hambrabis to attack the *Ahgama*. As they begin their strafing run, the mobile suits aboard the *Ahgama* prepare to launch. During the course of the battle Sara manages to escape. Fa sights Sara and aims the Methuss' beam guns at her while screaming that Sara may have caused the deaths of Shinta and Qumu. Sara reaches the Messala safely as Camille pleads with her one last time not to go. Sara thanks him for the ice cream and departs. Camille fires aimlessly in anguish.

Aboard the *Ahgama*, Fa despondently returns to her quarters. She hears the sound of running water and rushes to the bathroom to find Shinta and Qumu taking a shower.

"We figured this was the last place you'd look," Shinta says. Fa embraces them tearfully as the *Ahgama* heads for open space.

"The Mysterious Mobile Suits"

Aboard the bridge of the *Ahgama*, Char and Bright discuss the ship's next mission with Won Lee. They can't take the *Ahgama* back to the moon for repairs because it is imperative that they reach Axcis before the *Dogoth Gear*. If the Titans arrive at Axcis first, they may negotiate a deal with the Jion forces, forming an alliance against the AEUG.

As Reccoa exits the dining hall, Char and Camille discuss her recent strange, almost anti-social, behavior. Camille asks Char to discuss the situation with her, but he says that he doesn't feel as though he has the right to force his way into her feelings.

Aboard the *Dogoth Gear*, Scirocco asks Sara for her impression of Yazan Gable. Sara has found Yazan to have a relatively violent and animalistic personality. Scirocco finds this amusing.

The *Ahgama*'s bridge crew notices the *Dogoth Gear* paralleling their course and realizes that the ship is trying to pass them in order to reach Axcis first. Won Lee feels it's necessary to launch an attack to slow the Titans down. Char has a plan of his own, but says it will take 30 minutes to set into motion.

Char goes to Reccoa's room to talk to her. As Camille eavesdrops on their semi-intimate conversation, Char asks Reccoa to fly the replica Gelgoog to power the megabazooka launcher. Reccoa agrees, but with little enthusiasm. They continue their almost emotionless discussion and end it with a half-hearted kiss.

Back at the *Dogoth Gear*, Scirocco and Yazan are introduced to each other. Scirocco asks Yazan what he thinks of the Hambrabi, to which Scirocco replies that he doesn't like it, and feels the presence of an unidentifiable force. Scirocco remarks that Yazan has had it easy up until now. Yazan disagrees.

"You can't win battles through sheer force alone," continues Scirocco. "You came to the *Dogoth Gear* because you felt this unidentifiable force. The *Dogoth Gear* has a different air of power when I am in command. You are just beginning to feel your full potential."

"Paptimus Scirocco, you're a fun guy."

The alarm claxons on the *Dogoth Gear* sound, notifying the crew of incoming hostile mobile suits. As the crew scrambles, Sara ponders Scirocco and Yazan's meeting. "If this is the first time they've met, why do they get along so well?"

The Titans' mobile suits launch to meet the AEUG strike force. Char and Reccoa hang back from the main battle so the Titans will not realize their intentions. Char senses Scirocco aboard the *Dogoth Gear*, and the newtype emanations throw his aim off. Char's second shot strikes and disables one of the launch decks. When his third shot misses the bridge, Scirocco orders Yazan to launch. Char sends Reccoa back to the *Ahgama*, but as she returns she thinks of Scirocco and heads for the *Dogoth Gear*. Camille engages Yazan in combat by firing multiple shots at him, but Yazan's piloting expertise makes him a nearly impossible target. Yazan closes to melee range, where he is at his most effective.

Yazan's Hambrabri damages the Zeta's maneuvering verniers, forcing Camille to retreat. Yazan gives chase but as he closes for the kill, Reccoa's Gelgoog rams into the Hambrabi and throws Yazan off his course. Reccoa escorts Camille toward the *Ahgama*, but Yazan continues pursuit with the Zeta damaged and the Gelgoog unarmed. Before he can inflict permanent damage, the Hambrabi is showered with beam gun fire from an unexpected source. The battlefield is suddenly invaded by several dozen unknown mobile suits, firing exclusively upon the Titans' units. Scirocco, amused and relatively unconcerned about this development, orders the Titans forces to return to the *Dogoth Gear* as the ship retreats.

Back aboard the *Ahgama*, Camille thanks Reccoa for rescuing him, but questions her recklessness in attacking while piloting an unarmed mobile suit. Reccoa tells him that she was just paying him back for rescuing her at Jaburo and that's all that counts.

The *Ahgama*'s crew contemplates their current situation, having been rescued and now surrounded by an unknown swarm of mobile suits.

"Envoy from the Axcis"

Aboard the *Ahgama*'s bridge, Won Lee and Bright Noah theorize that Axcis must be slowly building their forces in the asteroid belt. Won comments that this never could have happened if the federal forces had not ignored events in space for so long. With the shuttle ready to launch to the *Gwadan*, Bright and Won depart.

Fa attempts to coerce Camille into not leaving, saying his presence won't be necessary. When he tells her that Bright has ordered his inclusion in the mission, Fa accuses him of going only because he's concerned for Reccoa's safety. Camille responds, "Nonsense."

The shuttle launches with Won Lee, Bright, Camille, Char, Reccoa and Apori. Upon arriving at the *Gwadan*, Char spots

Haman Kahn, a sight he had expected. Won Lee presents himself and asks to see the leader. Haman offers to introduce them. Four-meter thick security doors open to display the grandeur of the Zabi throne room and the heir to the Zabi throne, Mineva Zabi.

Discovering that the Axcis forces are led by an eight-year-old girl shocks everyone but Char. Won Lee complains that he cannot negotiate with a child and resigns himself to dealing with Haman. Mineva requests the "man with the sunglasses" to step forward. Reluctantly, Char complies.

After a closer look Mineva recognizes and declares him to be Char Aznable, a fact which sends another shock through everyone in the crowd, except Camille. Mineva recollects a time when Char used to play with her. Char encourages her to tell him anything else she might remember. Mineva launches into what seems a rehearsed speech.

"Thank you for your long-term reconnaissance. The time has come for the Axcis to move. Please lend me your strength to recover the Axcis and restore the Jion empire to power for the future of all spacenoids. Jion Daikun's—" Mineva pauses, trying to recall more, as Char asks her to continue. Haman intercedes in the recitation.

"How could you have reared her in such a biased manner?" demands Char.

"As heir to the Zabi throne, Mineva must be able to lead the spacenoids, and I have reared her accordingly," Haman retorts. "Have your loyalties changed?" Angered, Char attempts an attack upon Haman, resisting the outnumbering guards but eventually becoming restrained. Haman, stating that she will not tolerate this kind of behavior before Mineva, has the AEUG negotiating party escorted to a holding cell.

Once within the cell, Char intiates a ruse to gain escape by mercilessly pummeling Camille. The disturbance eventually lures a guard within the cell. Won Lee secures a gun from the guard as Char escapes. When the remainder of the negotiating party tries to rouse Camille, they discover that Char's beating had been for real. Reccoa and Camille leave to find Char, as Reccoa voices her resentment at Camille coming along to "look after her."

In the throne room, Mineva cries for Haman, fearing that Char is after her. Char confronts Haman and threatens her death as Haman accuses Char of betrayal. Reccoa and Camille make a timely entrance and rescue Char from a further confrontation with Haman, who fires a parting shot at Char which Reccoa intercepts in the shoulder. Camille scolds her. "Why did you have to lose your cool here?" Reccoa admonishes him to think of their escape instead of scolding her. As they suit up for space, Camille continues to scold Reccoa for her hot temper.

The two trios (Reccoa, Char, and Camille in one group; Won Lee, Bright, and Apori in the other) manage to separately shoot their way to the launch deck, rendezvous and escape. Noticing a fire in the *Gwadan*'s bay, the *Ahgama*'s bridge crew launch multitudes of inflatable dummy asteroids to cover the shuttle's escape. As the shuttle returns to the *Ahgama*, the mobile suit pilots prepare to launch. Reccoa insists upon being included in the force being launched to counter the expected attack from the *Gwadan*, even though she is injured. A group of hostile mobile suits *does* approach, but they're not from the *Gwadan*. Although Haman prepares the mobile suits aboard the *Gwadan*, she is reluctant to give the order to launch, as Char knows the *Gwadan*'s crew are all new recruits.

Within the trio of Hambrabis, Yazan Gable, Dankle Cooper, and Ramses Hassa are loading a group of Garubaldy Betas to attack the *Ahgama* with the intention of utilizing the "spider's web" attack. Aboard the *Dogoth Gear*, Scirocco is pleased that negotiations between AEUG and Axcis have failed. During the course of the battle, the Hambrabi team ensnares the Zeta Gundam in a network of interlacing cables. Working in tandem, the Hambrabis send powerful surges of electricity through the cables, causing the Zeta Gundam to short out its monitoring screens and render Camille unconscious. As Reccoa duels Yazan, images of Scirocco race through her mind. The Hyaku-Shiki and the Methuss become damaged elsewhere in the battle. Fortunately, reinforcements arrive—six Nemos, the G-Defensor, and the Gundam Mk-II with the hyper-megalauncher—and Yazan is convinced into calling off the attack.

Later, *Dogoth Gear* meets with the *Gwadan*. Scirocco offers his services and allegiance to Mineva Zabi. "I, Paptimus Scirocco, shall carry out your will, Mineva Zabi, even if this body dies."

While the crew of the *Ahgama* and the *Radish* enjoy a pleasant reunion, Char remains alone in his room contemplating the day's battle. "Today's fight was senseless. I'm being manipulated by Haman Kahn, the ghost of Jion."

34 "A Beckoning Voice from Space"

As the crews of the *Ahgama* and the *Radish* work to restore the *Ahgama* into fighting condition, Camille questions Char on why he hasn't visited Reccoa in the infirmary. Char says he'll do it when he has time. Camille asks Fa to check up on Reccoa and see how she's doing. Fa helps Reccoa sneak out of the infirmary to her own quarters as they discuss Reccoa's tendency for danger situations.

"Doing dangerous things has become habit for me. I used to live on the moon, before I got separated from my parents. After that I became a guerrilla during the One-Year War. Before I knew it, most of my friends had died. After the war, I joined the federal force and then next thing I knew, I was a member of the AEUG. I don't feel as if I'm truly living unless I'm on the edge of danger. That's how my per-

sonality has developed. Maybe it's because there has never really been a good man in my life."

Fa questions the importance of a man in determining Reccoa's life. Reccoa replies, "There's always been just men and women in this world. There must be something behind that." As Fa leaves Reccoa to her lonely room, Reccoa cautions her, "Don't end up like me, Fa."

Aboard the *Dogoth Gear*, Yazan and Scirocco discuss the recent lack of activity regarding the *Ahgama*. Scirocco asks Yazan to destroy the source of their recent problems—the *Ahgama*. Yazan is pleased when Scirocco promises something in return for this service. As Yazan leaves, Sara attempts to follow him but Scirocco stops her. "Don't involve yourself in Yazan's battles. Just watch and learn from his fighting style." Yazan and his attack force launch.

On the bridge of the Ahgama, Won argues with Bright on how the ship is being run when six enemy mobile suits are sighted. The ship is placed on red alert, as Reccoa hears a sudden noise in the back of her mind and is puzzled as to the cause. She heads for the mobile suit deck and encounters Char, who tells her she should not be going into combat while injured. Reccoa responds cooly, "What have you done for me, that gives you the right to stop me?" and continues on to the launch deck.

While still out of visible range, Yazan's group prepares for battle by deploying a dozen inflatable dummy Marasais. As the mobile suits launch from the *Ahgama*, it soon becomes obvious that Reccoa is not mentally prepared for combat. When she flies too far ahead of the rest of the team, Camille tells her to pull back. Reccoa asks him if he is the one who has been calling her. Confused, Camille says no. The battle ensues, and Reccoa hesitates when she hears a "strong will calling her."

When Yazan's group abruptly breaks off the attack, Bright asks Char and Camille to go ahead and scout the area. Once again, they find Reccoa far ahead of the remainder of the squadron. Camille wonders why she is acting so strangely. As the three proceed from there, they encounter the group of false Marasais and report them. Emma Sheen in the Mk-II and several Nemos are sent as reinforcement while Reccoa is recalled to help protect the *Ahgama* and the *Radish*.

"Left behind again," she mutters as she returns.

With most of the AEUG mobile suits pulling out to battle the Marasai squadron, Yazan pursues his true mission and presses the attack on the *Ahgama*. Reccoa engages Yazan in hand-to-hand combat before he is able to do any real damage to either of the ships. During the duel Reccoa is once more distracted by the feeling that someone is calling her, and by the newtype emanations that she believes are coming from Yazan. Yazan takes advantage of Reccoa's preoccupation and cripples the Methuss during her inaction.

"Death no longer frightens me . . . perhaps that's why I've wanted to die," remarks Reccoa to herself. "But if someone is calling me . . . who?"

As Yazan closes in for the kill, Reccoa ejects from the Methuss and faces Yazan's Hambrabi. "Is it you? Are you the one who's been calling me?" As the Methuss explodes, Yazan retrieves Reccoa and prepares to renew his attack on the *Ahgama*. Realizing that the majority of the Marasai squadron was false, Camille, Emma and Char return and drive Yazan off before he can cause further damage. Yazan calls off the attack and flies back to the *Dogoth Gear* with Reccoa as his prize to present to Scirocco.

As the pilots return to the *Ahgama*, they realize Reccoa is missing. They fear she is dead, for none of them witnessed her being removed from the scene by Yazan. Camille strikes Char in frustration and blames him for Reccoa's death as the *Ahgama* prepares to dock with the repair station, La Vienne Rose.

"Storm at Kilimanjaro"

The *Ahgama* and *Radish* go their separate ways after arriving at La Vienne Rose. Shinta and Qumu accidentally damage Haro, so they ask Camille to repair him. Camille, still upset over Reccoa's apparent death, brushes off their request. Fa rebukes Camille and he eventually agrees to make the children happy and repair Haro.

In the briefing room, Char prepares everyone for their next mission. In cooperation with the Kalaba forces, the *Ahgama* is to provide a missile barrage on the Titans base at Mount Kilimanjaro to give fire support to the Kalaba ground forces. Thinking of Earth reminds Camille of Four Murasame once more. Camille argues that the *Ahgama* should provide direct mobile suit support as Char announces that everyone is to stay in space with the *Ahgama*. Camille storms out of the briefing room, wanting to go back to Earth and find out if Four is still alive. Shinta and Qumu surprise Camille in the hallway and thank him for fixing Haro. Camille gives Haro to them when they promise not to break him again.

Aboard a Titans' cruiser, Yazan prepares to lead the Hambrabi and Barzam team in another strike against the *Ahgama*. As the *Ahgama* launches its missile barrage, the approaching mobile suits are noticed. The *Ahgama*'s mobile suits are launched in defense and another dogfight ensues. During the battle, Char is knocked into Earth's gravity well and the Hyaku-Shiki plummets out of control. Seeing Char in trouble, Camille transforms the Zeta Gundam into Wave Rider mode and goes after him. Yazan, figuring that they'll both burn up during re-entry, ignores them and concentrates on the *Ahgama*. Camille maneuvers the Wave Rider just under the Hyaku-Shiki so Char can regain control. (The Wave Rider was designed with the same principles as the Gundam Mk-II's flying armor; they were both built to be re-entry capable.) Realizing that Camille and Char won't be overcome by Earth's gravitational pull, Bright orders them to rendezvous with the Kalaba forces at Kilimanjaro. The Zeta Gundam and Hyaku-Shiki descend through the upper atmosphere into the midst of battle.

Inside the Titans base, Jamitov Hyman orders the deployment of a new weapon even though it's still undergoing testing. From the Titans' hangar bay, the Minovski Craft Psycho Gundam comes forth. Char and Camille examine a surprisingly unfrozen lake at the base of the mountain. When they see the Psycho Gundam, they decide to hide in the lake. Seeing the Psycho Gundam again has Camille thinking that Four is alive, but he senses that she isn't there and that there is something different about this Psycho Gundam. Char suspects the lake to be the base's water source and goes to locate an inlet tube near the bottom. He tells Camille to guard the mobile suits while he investi gates. Camille, feeling that he can't trust Char alone, ignores the order and follows him anyway.

Camille pushes forward, thinking he hears a faint scream. Camille, being more sensitive than Char to newtype emanations, is stricken with head pains as the psycho pulse wave increases. Char tells Camille to go back, but he insists on continuing, hoping that Four is still alive.

In a control room ahead, Four is writhing in pain while strapped to the psychommu control seat. (The psychommu control seat allows Four to control the Psycho Gundam over great distances, although the pain is incredible.) Jamitov decides that Four is more effective piloting the Psycho Gundam, since she resists the effects of the psychommu control seat. When the seat is turned off, Camille and Char feel the psycho wave pressure subside. As Jamitov is leaving the control room, he runs into Camille and Char. Recognizing Jamitov, Char fires at him as Jamitov retreats into the control room, locking the door behind him. Char and Camille end up in the psychommu control room with Four, but she doesn't seem to notice them. As Four heads toward the Psycho Gundam's

docking bay, Camille repeatedly tries to alert Four to his presence while she keeps repeating, "I understand, I'll fly Psycho Gundam into combat personally." Char tries to shoot her but Camille stops him, subsequently giving Four the chance to board and launch Psycho Gundam.

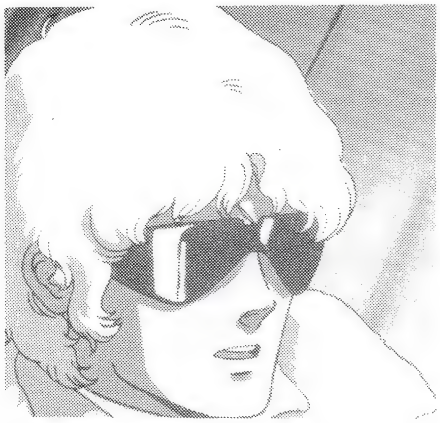
Outside, Amuro in the Dijeh is looking for any sign of the two AEUG mobile suits that were reported to have come down from space. Four interrupts his search, firing at multiple Kalaba targets. Char and Camille appear. Camille pleads with Four to stop fighting. Four responds with firepower. Amuro says to Char, "You should have stopped the two of them."

"You mean Camille and Four?"

"You should know better. You're going to recreate a mistake from the past."

36 "Four Forever"

In a Kalaba camp near Mount Kilimanjaro, Char, Amuro and a few other Kalaba soldiers discuss combat tactics concerning their next strike on Kilimanjaro. Char and Camille discuss Camille's relationship with Four, after which Camille decides to infiltrate the Titans base on his own. On the way, Camille spots a new mobile suit still under construction.



Camille and Four literally home in on each other using newtype aura to guide them. Happy to see each other again, they head toward Four's quarters and are spotted en route by Jerid Mesa as he's leaving the infirmary. Jerid quietly follows them but is unable to match their pace, due to his previous injuries. Camille and Four's joyful reunion is abruptly halted by a sudden migraine that strikes her. Camille gives Four the medicine she asks for but it isn't enough to quell the pain. When Camille takes her to a doctor, they are seen by Jerid once again, who scowls and relentlessly resumes pursuit. Camille and Four enter Namika Cornell's office, where she administers a dose of medicine to Four. Suddenly, she recognizes Camille. Camille neutralizes the guard, prevents Namika from sounding the alarm, and begins to search through the office's computer files, finally locating the entry on Four Murasame. Camille surmises that Four is the Murasame Institute's fourth biosoldier before Namika corrects him, stating that Four is an artificial newtype, *not* a biosoldier. Namika explains that biosoldiers are genetically engineered and bred to simulate newtypes, while artificial newtypes were originally normal people who were scientifically altered to simulate newtypes.

Jerid enters the room with his gun drawn, stating, "I don't care if you have Namika as a hostage. I'll shoot anyway." Noticing that Jerid is injured, Four blindsides him and takes his gun.

Four and Camille escape outside where Camille promises to take her to the AEUG, where hopefully they will find a way to restore her memory. Once more, Jerid catches up with them, brandishing yet another gun. Before he can fire, however, he is distracted by incoming Kalaba mobile suits, flying overhead to attack the base. Camille takes this opportunity to disarm Jerid and throw him down the mountainside. As the battle rages overhead, Char, in the Hyaku-Shiki, uses the Wave Rider as a flying platform and scans the terrain in hopes of locating Camille. Jerid slowly struggles up the mountainside to the hangar bay, cursing Camille all the way. As Camille and Four hurry from the base, Four is stricken with another migraine. Camille tries to assist her but she pushes him away, standing on her on, emitting a powerful enough psycho wave that newtype energy can visibly be seen emanating from her body.

Four's eyes glow a bright blue as she glares at Camille. No longer recognizing him, she demands, "Who are you? You must be the enemy." Inside a mobile suit repair bay, Jerid appropriates the mobile suit Byalant while it is still being tested. The mechanics' protests fall on deaf ears, as Jerid is determined to kill Camille at all costs.

Camille desperately tries to snap Four back into her non-combat persona. "I understand," says Four, "you are Camille Vidan, pilot of the Zeta Gundam, a warrior for the AEUG." Four stands at the edge of the mountain, broadcasting psychommu signals to call the Psycho Gundam to her. Camille tries to stop her from boarding the Psycho Gundam, but Four lifts him by his collar with one hand and casually tosses him aside as if he were a wet dish rag.

Jamitov makes preparations to leave for space as one of the base commanders assures him that the Titans' mobile suits will protect his shuttle at all costs. As Four shoots down Kalaba mobile suits, Char spots Camille and lands the Zeta and Hyaku-Shiki before him.

"Camille, hurry! We need Zeta Gundam!"

"You want me to shoot Four?"

"Grow up, Camille! This is war!"

Camille boards the Zeta Gundam still intent on saving Four rather than slaying her. He pilots the Zeta Gundam into battle while trying to protect her, despite her continual shots at him. Jerid suddenly enters the combat in the Byalant, complicating the situation even further for Camille. Four then receives orders to provide covering defensive fire for Jamitov's shuttle; reluctantly, Four complies. Her support keeps the Kalaba forces at bay long enough for the shuttle to escape.

From underground, massive explosions begin to rip through the Titans base. The mobile suit attack gives Kalaba ground forces distraction enough to plant high explosives throughout the base. The explosions also destroy the psychommu control room which is responsible for Four's personality changes. This disruption of psychommu transmission disorients Four. Camille, sensing her confusion, leaves his duel with Jerid to see if she is all right. Four, her combat personality no longer dominant, recognizes Camille's voice. As she turns to face him, Four sees the Byalant, beam saber in hand, swooping down to impale the Zeta Gundam. Four raises the Psycho Gundam and knocks Camille to safety. The Byalant plunges its beam saber to the hilt into Psycho Gundam's forehead, just above the cockpit hatch. Four is knocked from the cockpit due to the collision.

As she falls to Earth like an autumn leaf, Camille hears her voice in his mind. "Camille, don't be sad, now I can always be with you." Camille ejects from the Zeta Gundam and rushes to her side. Cradled in his arms, Four looks up at him one last time and her body goes limp.

Amuro says quietly, "Men continue to repeat their mistakes. I'm sorry Camille, but you can't die yet. As long as a warrior lives, he must fight."

The Hyaku-Shiki and the Dijeh transport Camille, who is cradling Four's body, and the Zeta Gundam away from the mountain before it explodes.

"I can no longer call you Quattro Bagina. Once again, you must become Char Aznable," says Camille.

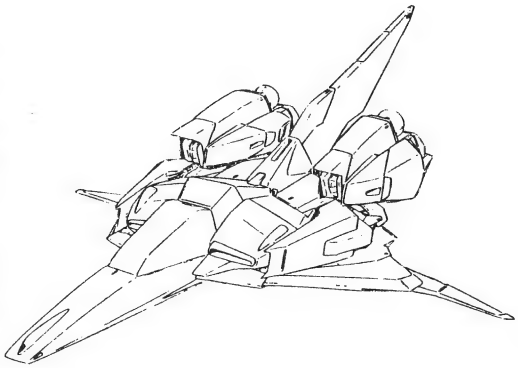
"I suppose you're right." ■

MECHA FILE

BY JAMES TEAL

A Continuing Series on the Mechanics and Robots of Japanese Animation

Analysis of the MSZ-006 Zeta Gundam from the TV show *Zeta Gundam*



The MSZ-006 Zeta Gundam is truly a remarkable piece of machinery. Its revolutionary design gives the suit the distinction of being one of the most versatile mobile suits ever designed. Although the primary function of the Zeta Gundam is as a mobile suit, its ability to transform allows Zeta to play multiple roles in combat.

The Zeta Gundam was constructed by Anaheim Electronics for the AEUG. The Zeta's design is derived from the Gundam Mk-II, the Hyaku-Shiki, and the Gundam Mk-II's flying armor. The Zeta is one of the very few mobile suits to be equipped with the Gundam Mk-II linear seat, designed and built by Franklin Vidan. This rare linear seat may well be one of the factors that makes the Zeta Gundam so effective.

The mobile suit is armored with the alloy gundarium gamma, also created by Anaheim Electronics. Gundarium is another form of lunar titanium. Gundarium gamma is lighter than gundarium alpha and lunar titanium, allowing thicker armor to be placed on a mobile suit without increasing the overall mass beyond design parameters. The Zeta Gundam's armor is treated with the magnetic coating process, as well as its shield and flying armor paneling on its back.

The Zeta Gundam is capable of transforming into a mobile armor configuration known as the Wave Rider. Zeta can transform from mobile suit to mobile armor in 0.5 to 0.8 seconds. The shield and flying armor panels are integral parts of this transformation, as they form the base and bottom surface of the Wave Rider. When Zeta transforms, the shield and flying armor panels are joined together. Since all three parts are magnetically coated and their combined surface area forms the majority of the Wave Rider's silhouette, the suit is capable of unaided re-entry into Earth's atmosphere. When the Wave Rider has no pilot, another mobile suit can control the Zeta Gundam and use it as a flight platform, much like a Base Jabber or Dodai.

The Zeta Gundam's primary weapon is its 5.7 megawatt beam rifle. This is one of the most powerful beam rifles in mobile suit history. Based on many of the same principles as the Gundam Mk-II's rifle, Zeta's rifle uses the same clips as the Mk-II. The rifle has a slightly telescoping barrel that remains collapsed in Wave Rider mode so as not to protrude beyond the re-entry silhouette. Considering the rifle's size, it would be clumsy to remount if the suit were suddenly engaged in a melee. To remedy this, the rifle can also act as a saber weapon, much like a bayonet.

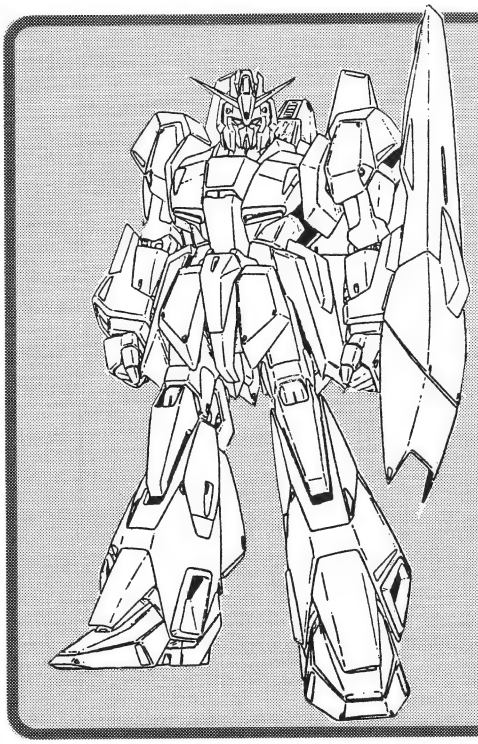
For melee combat, the Zeta Gundam usually employs one of the two .65 megawatt beam sabers located in the hip-mounted holsters. These are also multi-purpose weapons. While still holstered, the sabers function as 1.3 megawatt beam guns. They are primarily used as beam guns when Zeta is in Wave Rider mode.

Zeta is equipped with a pair of 60 millimeter vulcan machine guns, which later became standard equipment on many other mobile suits. These guns fire ten rounds per second, and are located near the temples of Zeta's head.

Built into each forearm are twin grenade launchers. The forearms have space enough for two grenades per launcher, making a total of eight grenades. Optional forearm-mounted cartridges that hold 19 grenades apiece were built later. For specific missions, the grenades are sometimes replaced with grappling units. The launchers are then capable of firing grappling cables, approximately 100 meters long, which can ensnare enemy mobile suits.

Zeta's most powerful weapon is the optional hyper-megalauncher. This is a smaller, modified version of the Hyaku-Shiki's megabazooka launcher. In normal combat mode, the hyper-megalauncher functions as an 8.3 megawatt beam rifle. In attacks on very large targets or clusters of normal-sized targets, the gun is given time to charge and is then fired much like a megaparticle gun at approximately a power level of 70 megawatts. Surprisingly enough, this massive cannon can also function as a beam saber.

To enhance the performance of the suit even further, the Zeta Gundam is equipped with the biosensor system to exploit the advantages of a newtype pilot. This allows Zeta to combat psychommu mobile suits and mobile armors without being at an additional disadvantage. The Zeta Gundam has proven its worth in combat throughout and beyond its own series.



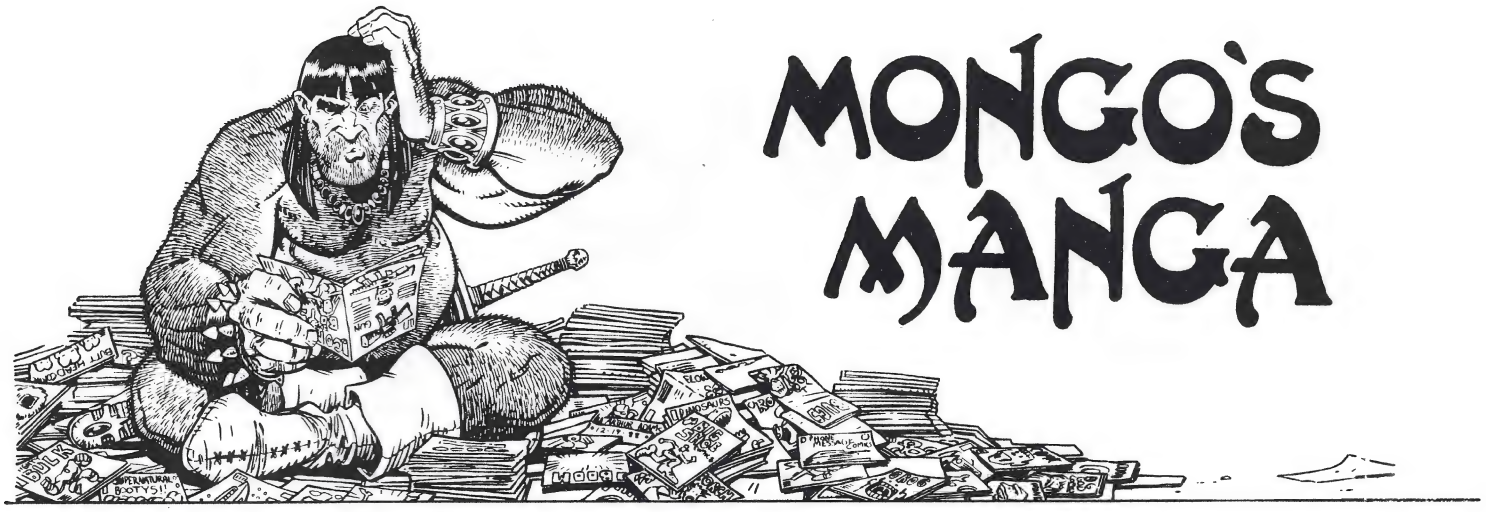
MSZ-006

Zeta Gundam

Height: 19.85 m
Wave Rider Length: 24.32 m
Wave Rider Wingspan: 18.61 m
Dry Mass: 28.7 tons
Full Mass: 62.3 metric tons
Mass Ratio: 1:7
Generator Power: 2,020 kw
Thruster Output: 112.6 tons
Sensor Range: 14,000 m
Armor: Gundarium gamma plus magnetic coating

Weaponry

- 5.7 mw beam rifle/saber (Gundam Mk-II clips)
- Twin grenade launchers x 4 (grapple launchers)
- 60 mm vulcan x 2, 600 rpm, 600 rounds of ammunition
- .65 mw/1.3 mw beam saber/gun x 2
- 8.3 mw hyper-megalauncher/saber



MONGO'S MANGA

Ranma 1/2

Remember last time when Mongo say that he like pretty girls who lean toward violence? Well, Mongo find new manga with violent, pretty girls—well, sort of pretty girls. This manga sometimes fall into the "Mongo-just-not-sure" category, only because like Ranma, Mongo is often confused about his sexual identity.

Ranma 1/2 is a delightful manga which began its career on the pages of *Shonen Sunday Magazine* (a comic anthology published weekly in Japan) in the first part of 1988. Its creator—writer and artist Rumiko Takahashi—is probably best known for her work, *Urusei Yatsura* (also know as *Lum: Urusei Yatsura* [Obnoxious Alien], published in English by Viz Comics), in addition to *Maison Ikkoku* and the *Rumic World* series.

Takashi's story-telling techniques in *Ranma 1/2* follow the classic Takahashi style; rather than a progressive plot line, Takahashi prefers to present a series of unrelated events involving the characters that she has created. As such, Takahashi is constantly introducing new characters in her stories to keep the plot fresh.

Ranma 1/2 is the chronicle of the series of events revolving around Ranma Saotome, the ill-fated son of a master martial artist. The binding element of the *Ranma 1/2* stories is the act of physical transformation that many of its characters undergo. For example, when Ranma is splashed with cold water, he changes into a girl; conversely, when splashed with hot water, Ranma reverts back to a boy. His father, Genma Saotome, alternates between his normal cantankerous human self and a fuming Giant Panda bear.

Their misfortune is the result of training over a mysterious haunted lake in the north of China. The lake is a favored place for martial artists to test their skill, for rising out of the lake are numerous bamboo poles with the lake itself being divided into a series of small pools—one pole for each pool. The martial artists fight on top of the poles, balancing on the edge. The danger of training over the lake lies in the fact that in each pool, some creature or person has drowned. Should one fall into a particular pool, you will be transformed into whatever being has died there.

As Ranma and Genma fight against each other, they both end up falling into different pools, where apparently, a young girl had died in one and a panda bear in the other. Shocked by their transformation, Genma and his son journey to Japan to stay at the home of his old friend, Soun Tendo. The Tendo household, although initially disturbed by the strange and often awkward transformations of Ranma and Genma, soon accept this as part of the routine of daily life.

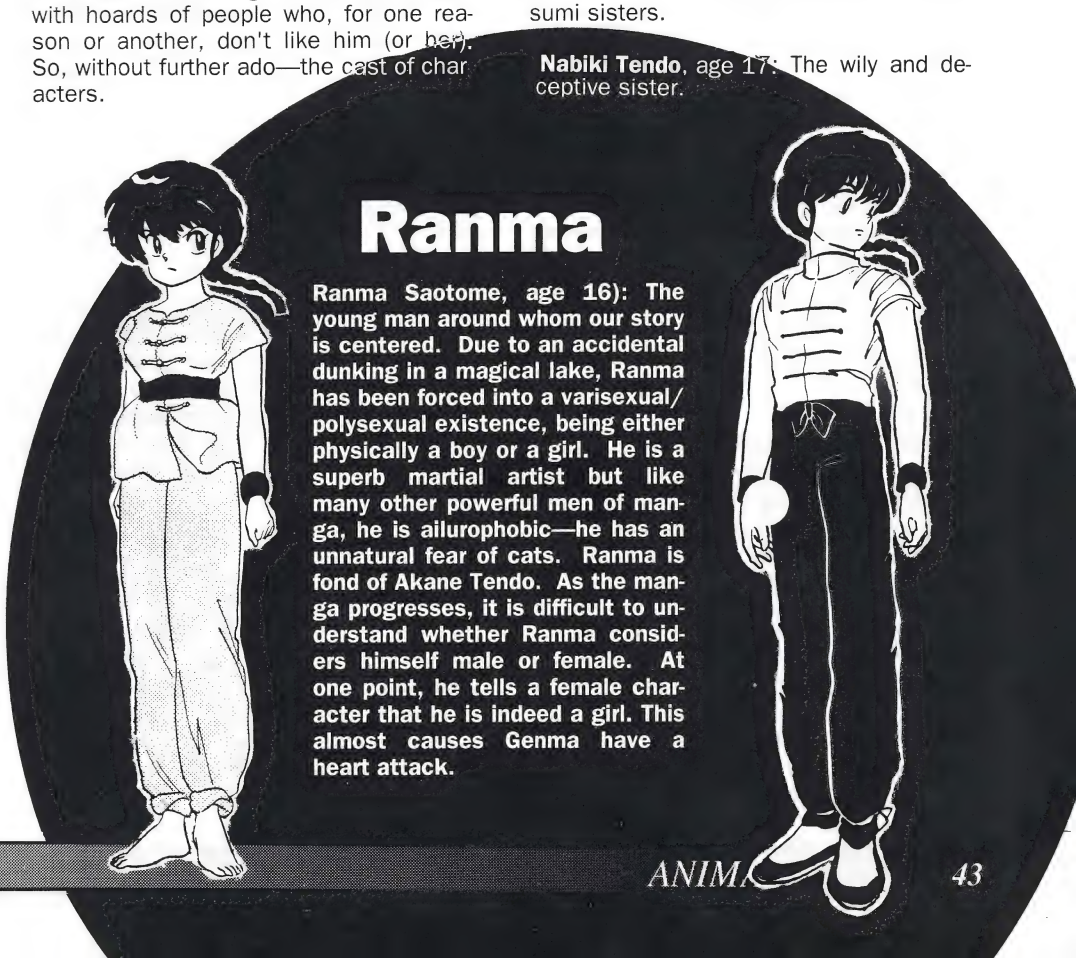
The rest of the manga concerns Ranma coping with his gender changes and the contradicting actions and emotions of his two selves, along with having to fight with hoards of people who, for one reason or another, don't like him (or her). So, without further ado—the cast of characters.

Genma Saotome: Ranma's father and a master of martial arts. He has a quick and nasty temper. It is his bane to be transformed in a giant, silent Panda bear. He is a good friend of Soun Tendo.

Soun Tendo: The father of Kasumi, Nabiki, and Akane. He raises his daughters alone until the arrival of his friend Genma Saotoma. Soun's closeness to Genma arises from the fact that they both trained together under the same powerful and sadistic instructor. Only through their combined efforts are they able to trap their teacher in a cave and, by dynamiting the entrance, "retire" him. Otherwise, they might not be alive today. We can expect Takahashi to bring him out of retirement at any time.

Tendo Kasumi, age 19: The eldest, most reasonable and even-tempered of the Kasumi sisters.

Nabiki Tendo, age 17: The wily and deceptive sister.



Ranma

Ranma Saotome, age 16): The young man around whom our story is centered. Due to an accidental dunking in a magical lake, Ranma has been forced into a varisexual/ polysexual existence, being either physically a boy or a girl. He is a superb martial artist but like many other powerful men of manga, he is ailurophobic—he has an unnatural fear of cats. Ranma is fond of Akane Tendo. As the manga progresses, it is difficult to understand whether Ranma considers himself male or female. At one point, he tells a female character that he is indeed a girl. This almost causes Genma have a heart attack.

Akane Tendo, age 16: The foil for Ranma. Initially, Akane is furious and repulsed when she "discovers" the truth of Ranma's transformations, but as the manga progresses, she develops a fondness for him. Akane is a tough fighter in her own right and is attacked daily by classmates trying to prove their mettle. When she was younger, Akane was infatuated with Toufu Sensei (Teacher Toufu). At the advice of her sister Kasumi, Akane grows her hair longer in order to look more "mature." However, when her hair is accidently cut off during a fight between Ranma and Ryoga, all hopes of a relationship with Toufu Sensei vanish.

Toufu Sensei: The proprietor (along with his skeleton, Betty) of a dusty, cobweb-infested acupuncture and chiropractic clinic.

Kunou Senpai: The self-assured, stylish leader of the daily siege upon Akane. Kunou is used to being *senpai* ("big man on campus"), and will not stand for anything less than being number one—especially when it comes to fighting. Not privy to the truth of Ranma's different identities, Kunou instantly falls in love with Ranma's "sister" while at the same time, vowing to destroy the male Ranma. He uses a *boken* (wooden sword) as his weapon.

Ryoga Hibiki: Like Ranma, Ryoga is also a victim of the Haunted Lake's magical abilities. Unlike Ranma, Ryoga seems to have gotten the short end of the stick. When he is drenched in cold water, his form becomes less than flattering—he becomes a small, black pig. Ryoga vows to destroy Ranma and his father, for not only are they responsible for his falling into the lake, but they did him the double injustice of trying to eat him while he was trapped in his helpless pig form. Ryoga later comes to live with the Tendo family where he falls head-over-heels in love with Akane. Ryoga uses a sword-like umbrella and whip-like strips of silk (worn like head band) as weapons. The umbrella is vital to him, for it prevents him from being changed to his pig form when it rains. He has absolutely no sense of direction.

Kodachi Kunou: The sister of Kunou Senpai. All of the girls fear Kodachi because she messes up their faces. She vows to "kill" Akane because she agrees to pinch-hit for a gymnastics competition and is going to steal Kodachi's spotlight. It is during a nighttime sortie against Akane that Kodachi meets and falls madly in love with the male Ranma. Kodachi's trademark is to give her intended victim a kiss and a black rose (usually scented with paralysis powder) before attacking later, when the victim is least expecting it.

Sanzenin and Asusa Shiratori: The beautiful, talented, and dangerous brother and sister skating team, which requires the combined efforts of Ranma, Akane, and Ryoga to best.

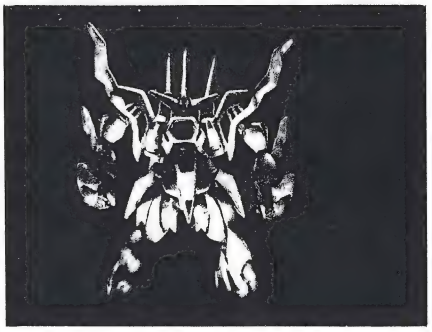
Shampoo: The mysterious girl from China who plans to kill the female Ranma and then marry the male Ranma. Shampoo is also a victim of the Haunted Lake. Cold water turns her into a very cute cat. Shampoo is proficient in fighting with swords or batons.

Shampoo's Great-Grandmother: A mysterious and powerful gnome of a woman, she has set her sights on Ranma as the man to marry her great-granddaughter, Shampoo. Shampoo's great-grandmother is a master with a staff. In hopes of sparking an interest in Shampoo, Great-grandma blackmails/bribes Ranma by first tricking him into his female form with an acupressure technique which makes the human body sensitive any sort of warm water, and then offering him a pill that will cure the problem.

All things considered, *Ranma 1/2* is a fresh, vital comedy which many longtime Rumiko Takahashi fans consider to be her greatest work to date. *Ranma* brings together traditional Japanese values and settings with a modern, fantasy-filled world—sort of like a radical yin/yang *Alice in Wonderland*. Besides, there are lots of pretty girls (especially Ranma) in *Ranma 1/2* (perhaps Mongo's opinion is tainted because he like Boy George and Culture Club). However, *Ranma* does possess Mongo's two criteria for a good manga: it has pretty girls, sometimes pretty, *naked* girls, and violence. That's the way manga should be, either full of fighting or pretty girls, although Mongo prefer both.

In summary, Mongo *like*!

JAPANESE ANIMATION



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ANIMATED

PLASTIC

By
Revell Walker

The Beginner's Section—Tools of the Trade

The following are some of the many tools the modeler can use to competently build his first to-scale animation kit:

Files are used to create a smooth, unblemished surface or to clean freshly separated components from the parts tree (the frame the model parts are attached to). Files come in varied grades, but a small set consisting of flat, half-round, and rat-tail files will fulfill most of your requirements. Later, when you advance to more complex models, you may wish to purchase a more expensive set of jewelers files that will allow you to perform very intricate work. The trick to using files is to remember to file either directly across the part at an angle when removing a lot of material, or in line with the part edge for removing a small amount. When using round or half-round files, be sure to make use of the curve in the file when cleaning a hole or radius.

Sandpaper is used to remove material or putty in your work. The best papers are of the wet-or-dry silicate type, which come in grades from #600 to #50 grit. The higher the number, the finer the grit. General sanding is accomplished with #180 and #150 grades. Use the finer grades for final sanding of primed surfaces prior to painting. When using the silicate type of paper, it works best with water. This prevents plastic and putty dust from loading your paper and rendering it useless.

Tweezers are used for picking up and handling those delicate, intricate parts.

Razor saws can be used as your first customizing tool. A razor saw can be used to section plastic parts and other chores that require some cutting.

Hobby knives are perhaps better known by the trade name, X-Acto Knives. Some hobbyists have their own definition of a hobby knife. There are almost infinite uses for these knives, making them valuable to the modeler, but be careful! Because they are extremely sharp, they can be dangerous to handle and should be treated with respect.

Cutting pliers (or "nippers") are employed in the neat separation of parts from the runners in kits.

Clothes pins, the "spring" type, can be used as clamps to secure your glued parts while they are drying.

Liquid cement is used to join parts cleanly and quickly. One drop of this adhesive will join a single part through a process known as capillary action. Just touch the brush filled with liquid cement to the seam of the joined surfaces and watch it run down the joint to create a strong bond.

Tube cement is responsible for many of the mistakes beginning modelers make due to the design of the tube itself, which is difficult to control by the average beginner. It is easy to use either too much glue and melt the joint, or use not enough to form a proper bond. If for some reason tube cement is the only adhesive available to the modeler, be careful to use a toothpick to apply a thin line on just one of the surfaces, and then clamp both surfaces tightly until dry. Testors Corporation offers a set of nozzles that will fit their brand of cement, which will ease the troubles often associated with tube cement.

Cyanoacrylate (CA) glues are known as the "super glues" that have become one of the hobbyist's tools during the past few years. CA glue offers incredibly quick drying times of less than 10 seconds. CA glue comes in three forms that vary the drying times because of their consistency: a watery type meant for porous surfaces, a syrupy type for slower and stronger non-porous joints in plastic and hard woods, and a newer type that is applied via tube in easily controlled amounts. CA glue needs only a small drop to do a big job. This is the cement of choice for those who build resin garage kits and soft vinyl animation kits. While these glues have greatly reduced the time needed to assemble a model, some modelers prefer the thicker CA glue to dry even more quickly. There are methods to do this. Fine-grain dust from wood sanding, microballoons, or plastic will cause a reaction that will cause CA glue to "smoke." This means the glue is working. Some companies offer a "kicker" that is Freon-based to help quicken the thicker CA glue. The modeler might also use common baking soda to make the CA smoke.

SAFETY NOTE: DO NOT BREATHE THE CA GLUE FUMES OR THE GLUE ITSELF! While CA is one of the most efficient glues to be used by the modeler, it is VERY dangerous to allow prolonged exposure to this as well as to other cements. Always work in a well-ventilated area, and NEVER let any glue come near your skin or eyes. If the glue should accidentally cause a bond between skin, make NO attempt to pull them apart. Use a CA debonding agent or allow your own natural oils to work it loose. The modeler will pay the price for his impatience with his own flesh if he is not careful.

The key to successful cementing is to use *only* the amount required to create a solid joint. Care should be taken to keep these cements away from clear parts. The modeler can attach clear parts to the model using standard white glue (which will dry clear).

Plastic putty is a useful material that

can be utilized to disguise a multitude of errors. There are several types of putties used by the average modeler, and they generally come in two types. The first is the filler-type plastic putty used in the automotive trade that is given the generic name of "bondo." The actual bondo formula is a two-part mix that hardens into a sturdy, sandable material. This formula, along with several others similar to it, is very heavy. For this reason, this putty is best used for heavy filling and building up of structure. To use it, simply mix a dab of part "A" with a bit of cream hardener supplied with the putty. How fast it sets depends on how much hardener is mixed in. When hard, just sand down to shape.

The second variety of putty is the "spot putty" which is used in thin layers to fill small crevasses and pin holes, as well as filling in joints in parts and sheet plastic. The most popular of these spot fillers (in the U.S., anyway) is Squadron Green Putty. This green stuff is very effective in doing all general gap filling when making models and scratch-building. It is available at better hobby stores.

Successful use of spot putty is accomplished by spreading on the putty and allowing it to dry in thin layers. Thicker layers will require longer to dry and may melt some of the model's base plastic. This putty can be thinned using laquer thinner and painted on the model's surface to reduce the time required to sand it smooth. Sanding is best done with fine-grade sandpaper, and it is recommended that wet sanding be employed with these fillers. If Squadron Green Putty is unavailable, try checking with an automotive supply store and purchase a tube of 3M Blue Putty (also manufactured in red and green).

Now that we've covered most of the tools, cements and fillers you'll need, choose a simple animation kit to build and wait until next issue for further advice on assembly. ■

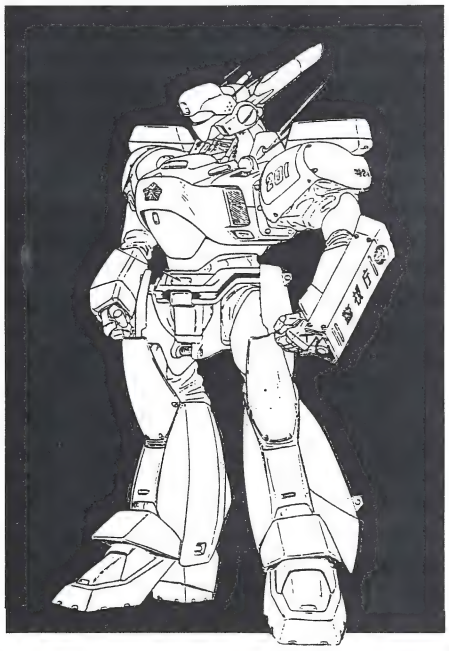
Animated Plastic New Releases Department

B-Club

A resin 1/8th scale version of Kaneda's motorcycle and a military flying platform from the film *Akira*. Both models have detailed white metal parts included.

Bandai

Return of the models from *Space Cruiser Yamato* and *L-Gaim*, a surprise release of a powered suit from the OAV *Starship Troopers*, and a 1/60th scale version of the Ingram Patlabor.



Huia Media Design

Bubblegum Crisis Knight Sabers' hardsuits; Nene, Priss, Celia, and a Boomer are included. Huia also offers kits of *Robocop*'s ED 209 and Robocop himself. These kits are all manufactured of soft vinyl.

Musashiya

The latest series of releases are based on *Space Family Carl Vinson*, a successful manga series which is now an OAV. Two of these releases, little Corona-chan and Beluga, are available in 1/8th scale. Other characters from the story are scheduled to follow.

Takara

Takara signals its possible return to plastics manufacturing with the re-issue revival special edition of *Votoms*' Scope Dogs (one plain and one space-type). These kits are 1/24th scale.

Zero Creative House

Madox-03 with "Wadcutter" Gatling equalizer. Those who enjoyed the first *Madox* kit will appreciate this newer version. This kit has many soft vinyl and metal parts. Another variant, equipped with an anti-tank missile launcher, is scheduled to be released soon. ■

ANIME JA NAI

By Trish Ledoux

Which animation character do you most resemble? This month, Anime Ja Nai presents a harmless little diversion designed to help you while away the hours—an animation character simulation game. Simply answer each question yes or no, following the applicable line until you reach your character type.

WARNING: This game is for entertainment purposes only. Anime Ja Nai assumes no responsibility for any psychoses or neuroses caused by the playing of this game. Persons attempting to derive personal insight from this mindless little piece of journalistic nonsense are advised to consult a therapist *immediately.*

Start

You're out walking when the intersection signal changes from green to yellow. Do you throw caution to the winds and make a dash across the street?

YES

NO

Char's Counterattack

The debate rages: was Char justified in his actions against Earth? Do the ends justify the means? In this corner: Char Aznable, charismatic leader of the Neo-Jion, who believes in the reformation of man by means of emigration to space. In this corner: Amuro Ray, leader of the Lond Bell forces and pilot of the Nu Gundam, who fights against the unethical methods of the Neo-Jion and especially, against Char. Amuro is willing to give his life for the belief that the ends do not justify the means. Where do you stand? Do you join Char in his belief that "mankind must be punished by mankind to atone for his crimes against nature"? Would you follow Char?

Area 88

Betrayed by his rival Kanzaki, his days at Yamato Airlines Pilot Training Academy behind him forever, Shin Kazama is a young pilot fighting in a Middle Eastern war against his will. Shin is now a member of Area 88's elite group of mercenary fighter pilots located in the small country of Aslan. The commander tells him upon his arrival, "To get out of Area 88, you have to survive the three-year term, pay the $1,500,000 fee, or . . . escape." Your situation may not be as desperate as Shin's, but do you have the poor fortune to be habitually deceived and mistreated by your friends?

Dirty Pair

Ah, the Lovely Angels, Kei and Yuri. Billed as "trouble consultants" for the WWWA (World Welfare Work Association), these charming girls are any man's dream—fashionable and trained in hand-to-hand combat. The trouble is, who can choose between them? Yuri is the more demure of the pair, more calm and collected, but Kei . . . she's the fiery redhead with a temper to match, whose childlike naivete lends credence to the statement, "Gentlemen definetly prefer redheads." Is Kei your favorite of the Pair?

Zeta Gundam

Camille Vidan, pilot of the Zeta Gundam, continues to fight against the Titans and the Axcis forces even as his conscience battles over the morality of his actions. In such a situation, when it might seem that your life had no other purpose than war, could you continue to fight . . . ?

Urusei Yatsura

Earth has been invaded and her fate hangs in the balance. Ataru Moroboshi, Japanese schoolboy and all-around womanizer, must compete and win against Lum, the invading aliens' daughter, within three days or surrender the Earth to the tender mercies of the aliens. Before long, things get way out of proportion . . . . Meet Lum and Ataru, the perfect couple, except for one thing: neither is willing to be the first to say "I love you." Are you able to trust another person enough to admit your feelings first?

Laputa

There was once a city in the sky . . . a magnificent fortress floating free in the clouds, from which man ruled the Earth below. But this, they say, is only a legend. There is talk of the secrets of the ancients being preserved there. There are whispers of a king's ransom in gold just waiting, up there. Surely such a city could not exist. Or could it? Do you believe that a mystical place, such as Laputa, could exist?

Bubble Gum Crisis

Priss. Linna. Nene. Celia. Four beautiful but deadly women who are very, very good at their jobs—mercenaries-for-hire, they'll do anything, if the price is right. Say that you're on the lam, and the Knight Sabers are hot on your trail. Do you—can you?—resist these voluptuous vigilantes?

City Hunter

Ryo Saeba, private investigator/gun-for-hire, is suave, debonair, cool under pressure and a crack shot. Ryo never hesitates to approach a *mokkori*-beautiful girl, usually in a very *sukebe* manner. You're at a party. Across the room, you spot someone who makes your pulse go wild . . . and unfortunately, you didn't take a shower this morning. Are you bold enough to approach this person?

You Are Type "A"

Like Lupin the III, you have the ability to make quick decisions and immediate reactions. Your natural confidence and self-assurance enables you to assume a dominant position in many situations. You take the initiative in matters concerning the opposite sex: you are confident, self-assured and impossible to bluff. You have an above-average love of adventure, and enjoy traveling (anywhere, as long as it's somewhere you've never been), think Q is the greatest inventor since the Wright brothers, and have read every John Le Carre novel ever published. You know every trick in the book and have invented some of your own, as well. The future interests you greatly. One of your finest traits is your get-up-and-go, but sometimes this can also become a fault—your tendency to rush headlong can cause problems. Take careful interest in the people around you and make calm decisions, but never forget the *joy de vivre* that makes you uniquely you.

Project A-ko

The scene: Graviton Institute for Girls. The event: a school bake-off. Your contestant . . . C-ko Kotobuki, best friend to A-ko Magami and the infamous aggressor in a series of vividly toxic box lunches. Given C-ko's well-deserved reputation, could you triumph over C-ko in the school's bake-off and determine once and for all who holds the title to "Worst Cook Ever"?

Lupin the III

What can be said about Lupin the III that hasn't been said before? Lupin the III is the world's greatest thief, the descendant of Arsene Lupin (infamous 19th century thief), a master of disguise, and a connoisseur of beautiful women. No matter how desperate the situation, Lupin, a man who lives by his wits, always manages to escape. You've always loved the 007 films, and Lupin the III is the next best thing to a Astin Martin with a passenger ejector seat. You prefer Lupin's cool, calculating side, rather than his *sukebe* manner?

You Are Type "C"

Despite your vivacious and outgoing exterior, you retain a gentle and essentially simple interior that many people find appealing. Like Ataru, you are afraid to reveal this "inner self," and people are often overwhelmed by your energy and your brash personality. Since you are a person of action, you never question, you just do. You often worry about the effects of other people's actions, but seldom bother to exercise restraint upon yourself. You find the mere striving for a goal brings its own, sometimes unexpected, rewards. Although you are never completely satisfied, you are always able to make sense of, cope with, and take advantage of any confusing or unfamiliar situations. Things are often hard for you, but you manage to turn this into an asset. You engage in friendly competition for the affection of others, although this has more serious undertones which belie your inner intensity. You know from experience that happiness doesn't depend on just one aspect of life, and therefore can find satisfaction on a variety of levels.

You Are Type "B"

You have a strong sense of empathy and are an eternal romantic—you'd never dream of a Valentine's Day without roses, and feel that a long, flowing cloak is the epitome of style. Just as Captain Harlock fights under his own flag, so do you; once you've set a course of action, your integrity and perserverance is impeccable. You claim responsibility for your own actions, and when it comes to duty, you are able to look a situation squarely in the face and accept the consequences. This is one of the finest aspects of your character. It is unfortunate that although you value your friendships highly, your outward appearance is often very distant. Because the people around you sometimes see you as cool, they may be reluctant to approach you as potential friends. Obviously, their loss is your loss too, so a more easy and natural approach to everyday situations might be in order. Relax, and your already close circle of friends is sure to increase tenfold!

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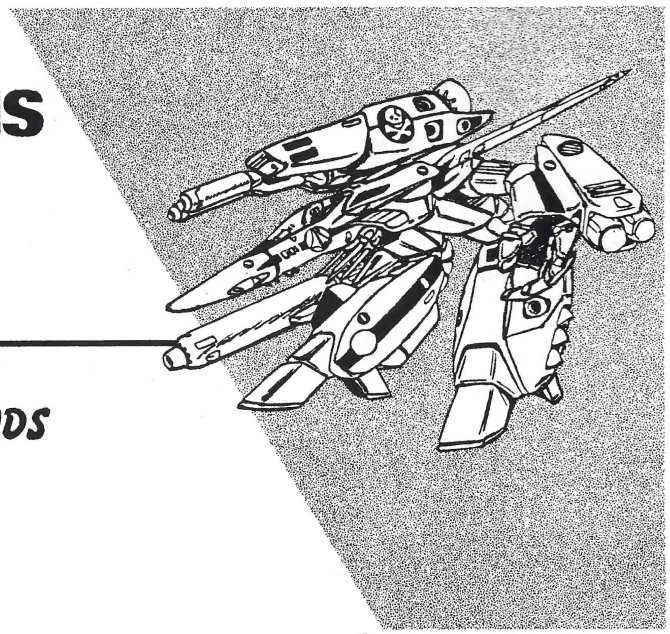

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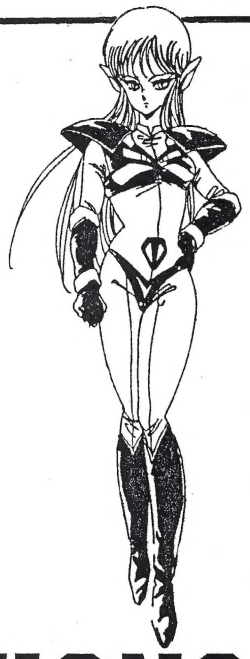

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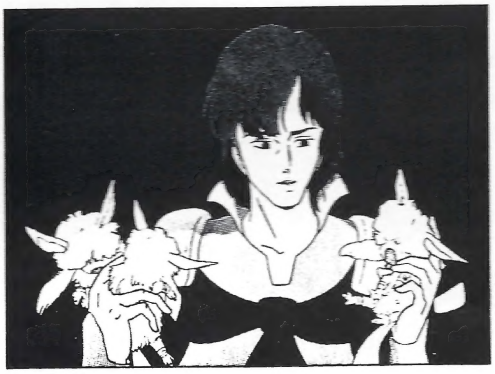

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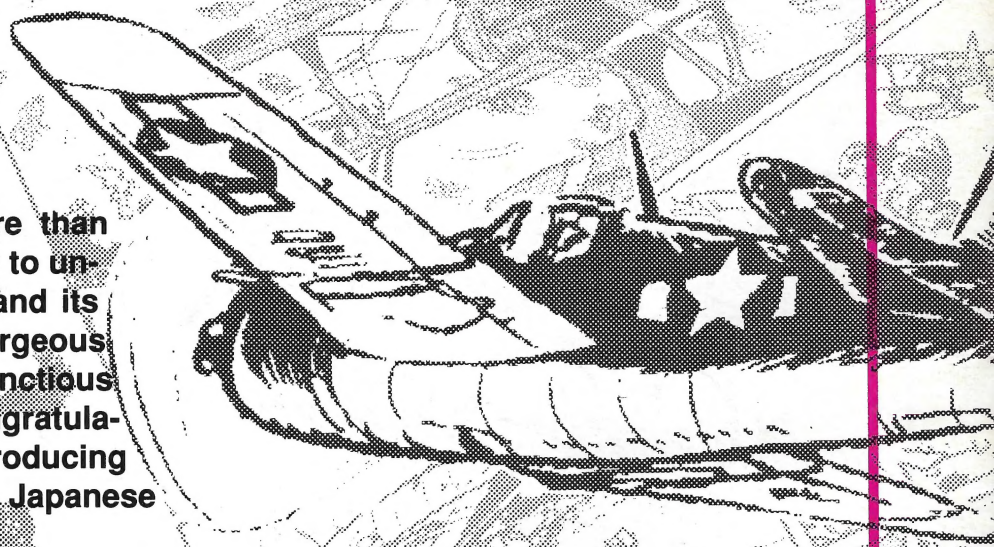

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